



Training into Practice:

An Evaluation of the Childhood Development Initiative's Training in Restorative Practices – Usage and Impact

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2021



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Glossary of Terms

Restorative Circle:	A facilitated discussion with a group seated in a circle with no tables or barriers in the middle, generally including use Talking Piece that is passed from speaker to speaker.
“Check-in” Circle:	Normally conducted as the first pass-around of the Talking Piece, “check-in” circles invite people to answer one or more questions about themselves, and are used to build relationships, focus the group, reax people into the group, and/or gauge the mood and energy in groups.
“Check-out” Circle:	Usually conducted as the final pass-around of the Talking Piece, “check-out” circles function to provide a balanced ending and a defined closure to a restorative circle process.
“Go-around” Circle:	A question answered by everyone in a circle one after the other as the Talking Piece is passed the whole way around the group.
“Popcorn” Circle:	A question answered by anyone in a circle who wants to answer it. The facilitator asks if anyone wants to start the discussion, passes the Talking Piece to whoever volunteers, and everyone else who wants to contribute requests the talking piece from the last person speaking.
Standard Circle:	A “go-around” or “popcorn” circle, see above.
Restorative Meeting:	A restorative circle facilitated to address and resolve conflict between one or more people.
Restorative Conference:	A restorative circle facilitated to address and repair the harm caused by wrongdoing.
Restorative Questions:	CDI’s RP Training is based on a set of six Restorative Questions as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• What happened?• What were you thinking of at the time?• What have you thought about it since?• Who has been affected and in what way?• How could things have been done differently?• What do you think needs to happen next?
Talking / Listening Piece:	An object that is passed around a restorative circle with the group agreement that the person holding the Talking / Listening piece will do the speaking and the rest of the group will listen. CDI emphasises the listening element of this rule in their restorative practices training.

Executive Summary

This report was commissioned by the Childhood Development Initiative (CDI) and evaluates its Restorative Practice (RP) training in 2019. It breaks new ground in that, as well as looking at participants' experience of training, it examines use of skills and the impact of training after the glow of training has worn off. Information on participants' experience of the training was taken from CDI's database of 624 trainees and their evaluations at the time of the training. Information on usage and impact was collected through participant surveys and interviews. Forty-eight survey responses were received and 41 participants were interviewed. The evaluation covered CDI's Getting Started with Restorative Practice and Facilitation Skills training as well as its Summer Course for teachers. Almost three quarters of all training participants were from the education sector and 69 percent were teachers.

The vast majority of participants expressed satisfaction with the training, with between 94 and 97 per cent of all participants saying they were 'satisfied' or 'very satisfied' with the overall training, knowledge presented, training methods, degree of interaction and trainer skills. Satisfaction levels in schools where training was supported by the Tomar Trust were slightly lower. Participants in the Summer Course training provided additional information on quality of training that provided strong endorsement. Most interviewees felt that their course had prepared them adequately for using RP.

As regards suggested training improvements, many participants said that they would like to see more challenging scenarios in role plays, more time for practice and discussion, greater use of videos featuring positive practice or TED talks and, in the case of the Summer Course, use of more up-to-date school material. Many suggested further training and support post-training. Some commented that the course could have been shorter, notably where training took place in schools after a full day teaching. Suggestions by interviewees also included a focus on whole school implementation and on use of RP in the face of resistance from colleagues.

As regards what worked well, all groups highlighted the active, participative nature of the training, including role plays, group work, work in pairs, opening and closing circles, and discussion and interaction within the group and with the trainers. All groups highlighted the calibre of trainers, the variety of training approaches used, the use of videos and illustration with practical examples.

Participants were asked to list one message that they had taken from the training. Comments by the Getting Started group focused most frequently on blame, shame, guilt, problem-solving, listening, restorative questions, building relationships, emotional intelligence, restorative language, calmness and the importance of preparation, fairness, and the need for practice. Comments by the Facilitation Skills and Summer Course groups followed broadly similar lines and also featured facilitator attributes, inclusiveness and RP as a response to conflict and poor behaviour.

Levels of confidence about using RP skills were very high. The percentage of participants in the Getting Started and Summer Course training saying that they were 'confident', 'moderately confident' or 'very confident' about using restorative language, working *with* people, observing fair process or having restorative conversations ranged from 91 to 98 percent. Facilitation Skills participants, for whom information was available for only a small number of participants, expressed lower confidence levels. Summer Course participants also indicated high levels of confidence for facilitating standard and fishbowl circles and restorative meetings and conferences. These ranged from 89 percent for conferences to 99 percent for restorative meetings. Participants were confident in their ability to facilitate events even where their expectation of actually facilitating them was low.

The vast majority of training participants said that they were 'likely' or 'very likely' to use RP skills for using restorative language, working *with* people, observing fair process and having a restorative conversation, with percentages ranging between 92 and 96 percent overall. School-related comments tended to emphasise use with students to deal with situations of conflict or misbehaviour. No-one said explicitly that they were unlikely to use the skills although two negative comments were made.

Several interviewees, principally teachers, reported regular and systematic use of RP in various settings, notably with students. Others who felt that they had made little use of RP in fact described frequent use in informal settings. A number of interviewees said that they had had little opportunity to use RP for a variety of reasons, including Covid-19 restrictions. RP skills that were used ranged from restorative language, for all participants, to facilitation of circles and meetings, for those who completed the higher level training. Much of the emphasis was on use of more formal RP tools in negative situations. People expressed a reluctance to use RP with work colleagues and few cited use in the community.

Usage was generally higher for the Facilitation Skills and Summer Course interviewees than for the Getting Started cohort, reflecting their training in a broader range of skills and the opportunities presented in schools. Some 85 percent of survey respondents reported using restorative language daily or weekly, over half had restorative conversations daily or weekly and just over a third facilitated standard circles daily or weekly; a quarter said that they had facilitated restorative meetings at least monthly. No interviewees reported use of fishbowl problem-solving circles, although a quarter of survey respondents (n=5) said that they facilitated fishbowl circles at least monthly. Several interviewees had used standard circles to address problems, but mostly they were used in schools for check-ins and check-outs and relationship building. No-one reported facilitating any conferences (with one possible exception).

As to what helped usage, interviewees highlighted the restorative questions and associated framework, being part of a restorative school or otherwise receiving on-going support, timetabled provision for circles and the demonstration value of successes. Hindrances included the time-consuming nature of the more formal interventions, lack of management support, resistance from colleagues and being the only trained person. Many interviewees expressed a need for and interest in additional training, especially refresher training and communities of practice, with a number calling for more challenging scenarios for role plays.

Many interviewees made comments of a general nature about the positive impact and effectiveness of RP and there were also many accounts of positive outcomes in individual cases. Survey respondents were likewise very upbeat in their views about the impact of use of their RP skills with large majorities reporting positive or very positive impacts at home and especially at work.

Sizeable majorities in the surveys agreed that relationships had improved as a result of the training. This was true for the home and community settings and particularly so at work. Scores for experience of conflict were positive but more muted. Improvements were also recorded as regards perceived personal effectiveness in managing conflict, identifying solutions and building and maintaining relationships at home, at work and in the community. Comparison of scores at the time of training and survey was possible in 27 cases. The number of respondents showing improved scores varied from 9 for building and maintaining relationships at home to 13 for managing conflicts at work. The number showing no change varied from 8 for building and maintaining relationships at work to 13 for identifying solutions at work. Those showing a deterioration varied from zero for managing conflict at work to six for building and maintaining relationships at work. Most scores where there was a deterioration remained high.

Personal impacts included changed mind-sets (especially in the Getting Started cohort as regards taking time to ask questions, listening, not jumping to conclusions, avoiding blame and shame), increased confidence, improved rapport and better practice. One teacher said that she considered herself to be restorative before the training but that the training was an eye-opener for her. More than one interviewee referred to the training changing their attitude to life. External impacts included a calmer, warmer, less stressful atmosphere at home or in school, children becoming more empathetic, students getting greater understanding and awareness, staff more willing to listen, clients not feeling criticised, students opening up about problems underlying poor behaviour and reductions in school suspensions. A Deputy Principal said that her message to teachers was that RP made their teaching more effective and improved their professionalism.

Several interviewees and survey respondents attributed positive changes to RP and the survey asked about changes that were *as a result of RP training*. One school Principal said that things had 'changed dramatically' as a result of adopting RP. Others attributed some change to RP but referred also to other initiatives that had been taken.

The evaluation concludes with ten conclusions and associated recommendations that cover possible changes to training structure, content and key messages; increasing and broadening usage at home, at work and in the community; implementation planning; the provision of support and quality assurance post-training; and training in schools supported by the Tomar Trust.

INTRODUCTION

1



This evaluation was commissioned by the Childhood Development Initiative (CDI) which is based in Tallaght and funded under the Government's Area Based Childhood Programme (ABC). The ABC programme aims to improve outcomes for children, young people and their families in some of the most disadvantaged areas of the country. The programme has a particular emphasis on improving health, educational and social outcomes for children and young people, and on improving the effectiveness of existing services for them.

CDI designs, delivers and evaluates prevention and early intervention approaches across a spectrum of local needs including language, literacy, health, early years, conflict management and community safety. All CDI programmes are evidence-informed and manualised, and are delivered through existing structures and services.

CDI's Restorative Practice (RP) programme emerged from its community safety work. RP is both a way of being and a set of skills for building strong relationships and resolving conflict in a simple and emotionally healthy manner. RP was designed with the aim of developing and sustaining strong and happy families, workplaces and communities through:

- actively developing good relationships;
- preventing the escalation of conflict; and
- repairing harm caused by serious wrongdoing.

Since 2010, CDI has been providing RP training and supports to a range of organisations and individuals across Tallaght and further afield. A previous evaluation of the training showed that after just two years, RP training was helping to reduce conflicts in workplaces, neighbourhoods and families and to improve relationships between service providers and service users, between neighbours and within families.¹

CDI offers a number of RP training courses as follows:

- **Getting Started with Restorative Practices ('Getting Started')**: This training explains what restorative practices are and how the whole RP approach works. The training provides an overview of the origins and development of RP; the evidence of outcomes that can be expected from adopting RP; and an outline of the skills that are used when taking a restorative approach. It aims to skill trainees to:
 - *use Restorative Language* to promote empathy and understanding between people;
 - *have Restorative Conversations* in order to resolve conflict or solve a problem with another person; and
 - *be fair*, consciously and competently, in relating to and working with others.
- **Restorative Practices Facilitation Skills ('Facilitation Skills')**: People completing this training learn how to facilitate:
 - *Restorative Circles*, used to build good relationships in groups or to solve problems in groups;
 - *Restorative Meetings*, used to resolve conflict in groups; and
 - *Restorative Conferences*, used to address serious wrongdoing.
- **Restorative Practices Skills for Positive Classroom and School Norms ('Summer Course')**: The course is a Summer Course for Teachers approved by the Department of Education and Science and is delivered to teachers from multiple locations around the country. The course aims to skill teachers and school staff to apply restorative practices in classrooms and schools generally. It includes the introductory and facilitation skills training, with a focus on the application of restorative practices in school settings and additional training in whole-school implementation of restorative practices.
- **Training of Restorative Practices Trainers**: This training equips people to deliver CDI's RP Training courses outlined above.

¹ Fives, A., Keenaghan, C., Canavan, J., Moran, L. and Coen, L. (2013) Evaluation of the Restorative Practice Programme of the Childhood Development Initiative. Dublin: Childhood Development Initiative (CDI).

From 2013 to the end of 2018, CDI delivered RP training to approximately 3,200 people nationwide. Up to the end of 2018, all training was evaluated by participants who were asked to complete 'satisfaction-with-training' and 'intention-to-use-this-training' scales, and provide any suggestions for improvement. Evaluation results to the end of 2018 were consistently positive in terms of both satisfaction-with-the-training ratings and reports of intentions to use the skills being taught. What was not known was whether trainees did in fact go on to use RP skills in their life and work, and, if they did, whether this improved their management of conflict and relationships.

In 2019, CDI began piloting pre- and post-training questionnaires that were intended to track change in people's experience of, and confidence in, both actively building good relationships and dealing with conflict and harm in a restorative manner. It secured permission from a cohort of over 160 trainees for an independent evaluator to contact them about their use of the training. The focus of this evaluation was to build on the evaluation framework being used by CDI and to conduct an independent evaluation that would assess the adoption, use, effectiveness and impact of RP skills by trainees. The evaluation was commissioned in November 2019.

The evaluation covers the Getting Started, Facilitation Skills and Summer Course training. The Getting Started training is normally delivered over two mornings a week apart or exceptionally in a full day or over four two-hour sessions. The Facilitation Skills training is generally delivered over three consecutive days to participants who have completed the Getting Started training. The Summer Course runs over three days. Group size is normally 8-18 for Getting Started and 8-18 for Facilitation Skills, with one trainer, and 16-25 for the RP Summer Course, with two trainers. The analysis compares results for the three types of training and for teachers and others.

The evaluation also covers training to a number of schools where the training was funded by the Tomar Trust. The model used was slightly different in that training was delivered on a whole school basis, generally in four sessions of two hours covering the Getting Started training. A core team, comprised of a selection of teachers with a particular interest in RP and those with a remit for dealing with disciplinary issues, was responsible for leading the project in their school. Facilitation Skills training was provided to members of the core team in one school and was planned in other schools. The Tomar sub-set of data is of interest because of the whole-school approach, mandatory participation, large (and sometimes very large) groups and delivery of training for some teachers outside school hours (at the end of the day or at weekends). The analysis examines Tomar results as part of the overall analysis and separately.

1.1 The Analysis

The evaluation relates to training carried out in 2019 between February and November. This ensured that participants had a minimum of about three months within which to try out their RP skills and report on the experience. Most had significantly longer than three months. The CDI database of course evaluations completed by participants at the time of training or shortly after contained 624 entries². This provided valuable information in its own right and as a benchmark against which to measure progress. Participants who gave CDI their consent to be contacted about the evaluation were invited to take part in a survey and most were invited to take part in an interview. The survey was open between January and June and the majority of responses were received in the period February and March. The interviews were held between March and June.

² It should be noted that this figure under-represents the total number of trainees as some participants did not complete forms and eight overseas participants were excluded.

1.2 Presentation of Findings

The report that follows begins with an outline of the methodology used. The findings are then presented by theme rather than by research instrument in the interests of avoiding repetition and assisting absorption of findings. The themes and relevant sources of information are as follows:

Table 1: Research Themes and Sources of Information

Section	Theme	Source of information
3	Feedback on training – satisfaction, suggestions for improvement, what worked well, key messages	CDI database, supplemented by survey and interview results
4	Anticipated use – likely use of skills, confidence in use, experience of conflict, and effectiveness in managing conflict and building and maintaining relationships	CDI database
5	Actual use of skills – extent, experience, comparison against expectations what helped or hindered use, interest in additional training	Survey and interview findings; comparison with CDI database information
6	Impact of use – personal and organisational	Survey and interview findings

The report ends with a section on conclusions and recommendations.

METHODOLOGY



2.1 INTRODUCTION

The evaluation used three main sources of information: the CDI training database, an on-line survey of training participants and telephone interviews with a sample of training participants. Focus groups were intended but could not be held due to Covid-19 restrictions. Each source of information is described and assessed below and a profile of training participants, survey respondents and interviewees is presented. The key objectives in analysing the database were, first, to review feedback on training and, second, to assess anticipated use of RP skills and experience and personal effectiveness with regard to conflict, with the latter providing a benchmark for measuring subsequent use of skills and its impact. The primary purpose of the surveys was to provide quantitative measures of frequency of use of RP skills and information on experience of conflict similar to that provided at the time of training, with a view to measuring change in the intervening period. The interviews were designed primarily to provide insights into use and impact, based on personal narratives. A secondary objective was to provide additional quantitative data on experience and personal effectiveness with regard to conflict to supplement the survey results

2.2 CDI TRAINING DATABASE

A starting point for the analysis was the CDI database. This contained information on 624 individuals who participated in CDI training in the period February-November 2019 and who completed a training evaluation/survey form at the time of the training or soon after. Of the total of 624 participants, 467 were at Getting Started level, 51 at Facilitation Skills level and 106 were Summer Course participants. The participant evaluations were completed in paper form initially and later electronically using Survey Monkey. CDI were responsible for database construction and data entry and provided a copy to the evaluator. Supplementary anonymised lists were provided by CDI on three occasions as new information came to hand. The data were presented as an Excel spreadsheet.

The first part of the data base contained information about the training course (type, date, venue, trainer) and the trainee (ID number, gender, organisation, position in the organisation, sector, county, whether they were a teacher or from Tallaght, and whether they consented to be contacted about the evaluation). The second part provided information on course and trainer evaluation, likelihood of use of the various RP skills and confidence in the ability to do so, frequency of experience of conflict, and effectiveness in managing conflict and building and maintaining relationships. Additional information was provided in respect of participants in summer courses, notably regarding learning outcomes, relevance to teaching, course quality and likelihood of using RP facilitation skills and confidence in doing so. Participants had the opportunity to elaborate on their responses as regards suggestions for improvement, what worked well, likely use of skills, confidence in using skills and main messages from the training. This qualitative data was a rich source of information. Analysis involved theme identification from a case by case examination and reporting based on frequency of mention by participants and documentation of key insights and views.

Data cleaning was carried out to eliminate duplicates and check anomalies. The data were anonymous, with individuals identifiable only by an identity number composed of their date of birth (day and month) and the first initial of their mother's maiden name, e.g. 1005F. Twenty-two participants shared a common identity number but their recorded details showed that the records were not duplicates. Thirty-two participants were listed twice as they had completed two different courses. There were 139 instances where no identity number was provided and this reduced the numbers potentially available to be matched for comparative analysis (at time of training and at time of evaluation) and to be contacted regarding the survey. Data cleaning also addressed a small number of cases where incorrect values were recorded for missing values ('0' instead of '9' or '99') and highest scores ('6' instead of '5' on 5-point scale). All changes were made in consultation and agreement with CDI.

The analysis comprised construction of frequency tables and comparison of results for different training types – getting started with RP, facilitation skills and summer courses. The data on frequency of conflict and self-rating for effectiveness in managing conflict, identifying solutions and building and maintaining relationships provided a benchmark against which to measure change which might be attributable to use of RP. The evaluation also includes a comparison between the results for the Tomar Trust-funded training and the standard Getting Started training.

In terms of where training participants were coming from, Education was the dominant sector overall, with three out of four participants from that sector (75%). The next highest sectors were Community Development (7%), Youth work (5%) and early learning/care (5%). The profile is broadly similar for the Getting Started training, with a slightly lower percentage from Education backgrounds (74%). The profile is significantly different for Facilitation Skills, with 88 percent from the Education sector. The Summer Course training is exclusively for those from the Education sector and all but two were teachers. See Table 2.

Table 2: Sector of Origin of Training Participants

Sector	Getting Started	Facilitation Skills	Summer Course	All Training
Education	73.9	88.0	100	75.4
Community Development	7.5	4.0	-	7.1
Early Learning/ Care	5.1	-	-	4.6
Youth Work	5.1	-	-	4.6
Other	8.4	8.0	-	8.4
Total	100	100	100	100
Total responses (n)	429	50	106	479

Excludes 'no response' cases of 38, 1, zero and 145 respectively.

Percentages may not add to 100 due to rounding

Participant sex was not recorded for the Getting Started and Facilitation Skills training. For the Summer Course training, nine out of ten participants were female (90.4%).

Reflecting the dominance of the education sector in the figures, more than two-thirds of participants overall were teachers (69%). For the Summer Course training, most were at primary level (92.5%), with small percentages for post-primary (5.7%) and 'other' (1.9%). A similar breakdown was not available for any of the Getting Started participants and for only six participants in the Facilitation Skills training (all post-primary).

Participants on the Getting Started and Facilitation Skills course were asked to indicate if they were based in Tallaght or not. The information was not sought in respect of Summer Course participants. Almost one in eight participants (12%) in the Getting Skills training were based in Tallaght and the percentage for the Facilitation Skills training was half this number. See Table 3.

Table 3: Participants Based in Tallaght

Sector	Getting Started	Facilitation Skills	Summer Course	All Training
Tallaght	12.0	6.1	n.a.	11.4
Other	88.0	93.9	n.a.	88.6
Total	100	100	-	100
Total responses (n)	460	49	0	509

Excludes 'no response' cases of 7, 2, 106 (all) and 115 (mostly summer course) respectively.

Participants on all courses were asked to indicate the county in which they were based. A small number of counties dominated the replies, led by Cork and Dublin. Twelve counties in the Republic did not feature, nor did any from Northern Ireland. Information was provided in respect of 88 percent of total cases. Cork was listed most frequently overall (37.5%), followed by Dublin (26.2%). The next highest percentages were under 10 percent and were in respect of Wexford, Kildare and Waterford. All other counties were less than three percent. The picture for the Getting Started training was broadly similar (with twelve counties featuring) while only five counties featured on the Facilitation Skills

listing. The county breakdown was slightly different for the Summer Course participants, with Dublin and Kildare dominating followed by Clare and Wexford. See Table 4

Table 4: Participants by County

County	Getting Started	Facilitation Skills	Summer Course	All Training
Carlow	2.7	0	0	2.0
Clare	0.2	0	13.2	2.7
Cork	43.0	56.1	9.4	37.5
Dublin	24.1	36.6	30.2	26.2
Galway	0	0	0.9	0.2
Kildare	6.0	2.4	20.8	8.6
Kilkenny	1.2	0	0.9	1.1
Laois	0.2	0	3.8	0.9
Limerick	0.5	0	0.9	0.5
Tipperary	0.2	0	6.6	1.5
Roscommon	0.0	0	0.9	0.2
Wicklow	2.2	2.4	0	1.8
Waterford	9.5	0	1.9	7.3
Wexford	10.0	2.4	10.4	9.5
Total	100	100	100	100
Total responses (n)	402	41	106	549

Excludes ‘no response’ cases of 65, 10, zero and 75 respectively.

Percentages may not add to 100 due to rounding

2.3 SURVEY

Two separate surveys were carried out, one of Getting Started participants and one of participants who completed either the Facilitation Skills or Summer Course training. CDI provided lists of training participants who had consented to being contacted and who had provided email details. The lists included valid details for 81 Getting Started participants, 31 Facilitation Skills participants and 57 Summer Course participants after removal of 17 participants with faulty email addresses (9, 1 and 7 for the respective courses). Thus a total of 169 participants were invited to complete the relevant survey. This represented 27 percent of the total number of participants.

The surveys were very similar and asked about frequency of use of RP skills by type and setting, the impact of their use of RP and for general reflections on the training and finally about experience of conflict and effectiveness of managing conflict, identifying solutions and building and maintaining relationships. See Appendix 1. The differences between the surveys related to the type of skills asked about. Respondents were invited to elaborate on their scores for frequency of use and use in different settings, impact of RP and overall reflections. The survey was designed to be simple and quick to complete. Respondents were given opportunities to expand on their answers with free-form comments which were analysed by theme, in a similar way to the analysis of qualitative information in the CDI database.

The surveys were carried out using Survey Monkey and took an average of just over 5 minutes to complete. Survey Monkey reported ‘typical times’ to complete the surveys of 4m 40s and 5m 20s for the respective surveys. The surveys were piloted on 16 January with invitations sent by email to ten participants each. Only two responses were received (one for each). A reminder was sent on 23 January but no further responses were received. The surveys were sent out

to all other participants on 30 January. Changes were made to the invitation letter to simplify its content and to reflect a shorter anticipated time for completion. The order of questions in the survey was also changed so that it started with the key questions on use of skills and finished with questions on experience of conflict and personal effectiveness. The questions themselves were not changed. A reminder was issued to the full group on 5 February. A request to RP trainers to encourage replies where they could was sent on 9 February. A further reminder was included in the interview invitations that were issued between 27 March and 7 May.

The survey was kept open for over four months, into June. The response rates were 35 percent and 23 percent for the Getting Started and Facilitation Skills/Summer Course groups respectively, with respective responses of 28 and 20 from the issued invitations of 81 and 88. The responses provide valuable information but cannot be interpreted as 100 percent representative of participants generally because of selection and response bias. The invitations to complete the survey were issued to people who had volunteered to be contacted about the evaluation and might therefore be predisposed to giving positive responses (the selection bias). Those who actually responded might over-represent those who have made greatest use of RP and under-represent those who have made little or no use of the skills (the response bias). The latter could be reluctant to reveal their poor use or feel that they have nothing of interest to say (despite the reminder encouraging responses regardless of level of use). This is somewhat speculative and other reasons for not responding might apply, such as survey fatigue or complications arising from Covid-19 restrictions. It is important to note nevertheless that the combined 48 responses represent just 7.7 percent of the 624 total participants and this level of response is relatively low.

Twenty-eight Getting Started participants replied from a potential pool of 467, a response rate of 6.0 percent overall. Of those whose background could be discerned from qualitative answers and interviews (n=15), all but three were in education; it was not possible to establish the backgrounds of thirteen respondents. Twenty Facilitation Skills and Summer Course participants replied from a potential pool of 157 (51 Facilitation Skills and 106 Summer Course), an overall response rate of 12.7 percent. Of the survey respondents whose background could be discerned from qualitative answers and interviews (n=13), all were in education, leaving seven with unknown backgrounds.

2.4 INTERVIEWS

A total of 39 phone interviews with 41 people were carried out, including one group interview by zoom with three participants. Everyone who gave CDI their consent to be contacted was eligible for selection. Selection stopped when sufficient numbers were reached. More interviews were carried out than originally planned, partly to compensate for the inability to arrange a focus group. Invitations to be interviewed were sent by email in four batches, on 27 March, 3 April, 23 April and 7 May. This phased issuing was to facilitate management of the process by the evaluator and to ensure that anyone who rang for interview could be responded to promptly. The invitation letter was personalised to increase the chances of a positive response. Reminders were issued on 8 April, 15 April, 7 May and 18 May, between 11 and 14 days after the initial mailing. Invitations were issued to 63 out of 81 Getting Started participants, all 31 Facilitation Skills participants and 45 out of 57 Summer Course participants. The mailing list was in alphabetical order and those on the list were emailed without skip pattern. Thus no new selection bias arose. The email invitations were necessary in order to get phone contact details.

The number of interviews was 15 for the Getting Started training, 10 for the Facilitation Skills training (including the group interview) and 14 for the Summer Course training. This represents respective take-up rates of 24 percent (15/63), 32 percent (10/31) and 31 percent (14/45) and is reasonably high. The interviews included participants who said that they had not used their RP skills to any great degree, which gives a measure of reassurance about representativeness. Four respondents got in touch to say that they did not wish to be interviewed (3 Getting Started, 1 Facilitation Skills).

The interviewees were asked about the extent of their use of RP skills in different settings, what helped or hindered use, follow-up training or activity, adequacy of the training and what would help greater use in the future. They were also asked about impact in different settings (see Appendix 2). The early interviews included the survey questions about experience of conflict and effectiveness in managing conflict, identifying solutions and building and maintaining relationships, but these were dropped when it proved difficult to get succinct answers that could be compared with the CDI dataset, some interviewees were under time pressure when working from home due to Covid-19 and interviews

were taking longer than was indicated in the invitation letter. The interviews took place between 30 March and 9 June. They were all written up from the evaluator's contemporaneous notes and provided valuable insights into people's use of RP, complementing the quantitative information from the survey.

The profile of interview volunteers was more varied for the Getting Started training than for the other two types. The Getting Started interviewees comprised nine with education backgrounds (all but one at second level) and six from miscellaneous other backgrounds (including two in area partnerships, a Garda Junior Liaison Officer LO and one person not currently in the workforce). The Facilitation Skills and Summer Course participants were almost exclusively from education backgrounds, the single exception being community-based but with strong links to education. Overall, all but seven interviewees were from education backgrounds, including four in support roles such as Special Needs Assistant or Family Support Officer. Thirty were either teachers (24) or in school management positions (4 Principals and 2 Deputy Principals). Of these thirty, 18 were from second level and 12 from primary level. Second-level teachers dominated the Facilitation Skills interviewee cohort while primary teachers dominated the Summer Course cohort.

Ten of the fifteen Getting Started interviewees had done their training between September and December while five had completed training between March and June (only two of whom were prior to June). It was not possible to deduce much about patterns of use over time and specifically whether there was a difference as between those who trained early and late. One interviewee who had been trained ten months previously said that she couldn't remember the RP questions now – despite being very positive about RP (#GS5).

The Facilitation Skills interviews related to training that was concentrated in two periods: May (5 interviews) and September-November (5 interviews). One interview was a group interview with three participants. All 12 interviewees were from post-primary backgrounds: seven teachers, two Principals, one Deputy Principal, one Special Needs Assistant and one Family Support Worker. Nine of the 12 interviewees were from schools where the training was supported by the Tomar Trust. This is of relevance because of the different model of training delivery and whole school involvement. The other three interviewees had key roles in the development of RP in their schools, including as members of the core team, and all three had undertaken Train the Trainers courses since – they could therefore be expected to be enthusiastic users of RP and perhaps not representative of all trainees. This could indeed be said to a degree of all interviewees by dint of their volunteering to be interviewed. The interviewees were from just four schools altogether and were concentrated in three schools, with six, three and two representatives respectively. Several spoke about the RP experience in their school generally as well as their own practice; the school aspect is reported only where it is relevant to the interviewees' practice.

All Summer Course training took place in July and August 2019 and the 14 interviews took place between March and May 2020. All but one of the interviewees were teachers, the one exception being community-based with strong ties to a school, and all but one of the teachers were female. Eleven were primary level teachers (including one Deputy Principal) and two were post-primary. They had a minimum of six months to practise RP in their schools before Covid-19 restrictions were put in place. One interviewee emailed in advance that she did not think she had much to report, although it emerged that she used RP quite a bit. One had embarked on training to become a trainer (#SC11) while another had applied but the course was cancelled (#SC13). The latter was also a member of the core team in her school, helping to drive RP implementation. See Table 5.

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 Table 5: Profile of Interviewees

	Getting Started	Facilitation Skills	Summer Course	All Training
Professional background				
Education	9	12	13	34
Other	6	0	1	7
Total	15	12	14	41
Period of Training				
March-June	5	5	0	10
July/August	0	0	14	14
September - December	10	7	0	17
Total	15	12	14	41

**SATISFACTION WITH
TRAINING**



This section examines course feedback at the time of training and presents findings on satisfaction with the training, suggestions for improvement, what worked well and main messages taken from the training. It draws primarily on the CDI database but is supplemented by comments from the surveys and interviews.

3.1 SATISFACTION LEVELS

The vast majority of participants expressed satisfaction with the training, with between 94 and 97 per cent of all participants saying they were 'satisfied' or 'very satisfied' with the overall training, knowledge presented, training methods, amount of interaction and trainer skills. Most were 'very satisfied', with percentages ranging between 70 and 77 percent. The satisfaction rates for the Getting Started training followed this pattern very closely. Satisfaction rates for the Facilitation Skills training were even higher, with 96-100 percent expressing satisfaction. Again most were 'very satisfied', with percentages ranging between 78 and 88 percent. Few expressed dissatisfaction, ranging from 1 to 3 percent depending on the dimension of training, mainly in the Getting Started cohort. Twelve participants expressed dissatisfaction, five of whom were from schools where training was funded by the Tomar Trust. There were no expressions of dissatisfaction for the Facilitations Skills cohort. These results exclude 'no response' cases, which were very low in number (ten or less overall). Information on Summer Course participants was limited to satisfaction levels with the amount of interaction, with 91 percent expressing satisfaction (all 'very satisfied') and 4 percent expressing dissatisfaction (all 'very dissatisfied'). Full details are presented in Table 6.

Table 6: Levels of Satisfaction with Training

Satisfaction	Getting Started	Facilitation Skills	Summer Course	All Training
Overall training				
Satisfied / very satisfied	94.2	100	-	94.7
Dissatisfied / very dissatisfied	2.6	0	-	2.4
Knowledge presented				
Satisfied / very satisfied	96.7	98.0	-	96.8
Dissatisfied / very dissatisfied	1.5	0	-	1.4
Training methods				
Satisfied / very satisfied	94.3	96.0	-	94.5
Dissatisfied / very dissatisfied	2.4	0	-	3.2
Amount of interaction				
Satisfied / very satisfied	95.7	100	90.6	95.2
Dissatisfied / very dissatisfied	2.2	0	-	2.3
Trainer skills				
Satisfied / very satisfied	94.4	100	-	94.9
Dissatisfied / very dissatisfied	1.9	0	-	1.8

Excludes 'no response' cases and those who were 'neither dissatisfied or satisfied'

Teachers had lower rates of satisfaction with all aspects of quality of training compared with non-teachers. A comparison between those classified in the database as 'Teachers' and as 'Others' shows lower rates of satisfaction for 'teachers' when all training types are combined and for the Getting Started training alone. See Table 3.2.

Teachers in schools where training was supported by the Tomar Trust had lower rates of satisfaction with all aspects of quality of training compared with all others (teachers and non-teachers combined) and compared with other teachers. See Table 3.3. This may be due in some Tomar schools to factors such as obligatory attendance, training at the end of a day teaching, resistance from some staff and large class size. The overall satisfaction rates remained high.

3.3 QUALITY OF TRAINING – SUMMER COURSE

Participants in the Summer Course training provided additional information on quality of training. They indicated the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with statements about seven aspects of quality as set out in Table 3.4. Very large majorities, ranging from 84 to 93 percent agreed with the positive statements in respect of six of the seven statements and over seventy percent agreed with the seventh statement (that the training had meaningful links with self-evaluation and ICT). All those who agreed in fact indicated 'Strongly agree'. Very few disagreed with the statements – four participants in all. The four participants were distributed across different courses and accounted between them for all negative comments. Analysis of their qualitative comments revealed that they were very positive about the course so it is probable that they misread the scale when replying, indicating '1' for 'Strongly disagree' when they meant '5' for 'Strongly agree'. Accepting this assessment would bring the range of agreement with the statements to between 88 and 97 percent, with all but three instances (0.4 percent of all answers) recording 'Strongly agree'. This provides overwhelming endorsement of the Summer Course.

Table 7: Satisfaction with Training - Teachers/Others

Satisfaction	All Training		Getting Started	
	Teachers	Others	Teachers	Others
	n = 430	n = 194	n = 288	n = 173
Overall training				
Satisfied / very satisfied	93.8	96.3	93.4	95.9
Dissatisfied / very dissatisfied	3.1	1.0	3.1	1.2
Knowledge presented				
Satisfied / very satisfied	95.9	98.4	96.2	98.2
Dissatisfied / very dissatisfied	1.6	1.1	1.4	1.2
Training methods				
Satisfied / very satisfied	93.1	96.8	93.3	96.4
Dissatisfied / very dissatisfied	2.5	1.6	2.5	1.8
Amount of interaction				
Satisfied / very satisfied	94.6	96.3	95.8	95.9
Dissatisfied / very dissatisfied	2.6	1.6	2.1	1.8
Trainer skills				
Satisfied / very satisfied	94.0	96.3	93.7	95.9
Dissatisfied / very dissatisfied	2.2	1.1	2.1	1.2

Excludes 'no response' cases and those who were 'neither dissatisfied or satisfied'

Table 8: Satisfaction with Training - Tomar/Other

Satisfaction	All Training		Getting Started	
	Tomar	Other	Tomar Teachers	Non-Tomar Teachers
	n = 132	n = 492	n =121	n=191
Overall training				
Satisfied / very satisfied	88.5	96.9	90.8	95.3
Dissatisfied / very dissatisfied	6.2	1.0	4.2	2.6
Knowledge presented				
Satisfied / very satisfied	93.1	98.2	95.0	96.8
Dissatisfied / very dissatisfied	2.3	1.1	0.8	2.1
Training methods				
Satisfied / very satisfied	85.9	97.4	89.0	96.3
Dissatisfied / very dissatisfied	4.7	1.3	3.4	2.1
Amount of interaction				
Satisfied / very satisfied	93.1	95.7	94.2	96.8
Dissatisfied / very dissatisfied	3.8	1.9	2.5	2.1
Trainer skills				
Satisfied / very satisfied	88.4	97.1	90.8	96.3
Dissatisfied / very dissatisfied	3.9	1.1	1.7	2.6

Excludes 'no response' cases and those who were 'neither dissatisfied or satisfied'

Table 9: Quality of Summer Course Training

Statement	Agree or Strongly agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree or Strongly disagree
The training achieving its learning outcomes	93.8	0	6.3
The training was professionally enabling and relevant to schools	93.8	0	6.3
The training improved my teaching and leadership skills	84.4	9.4	6.3
The trainers provided appropriate feedback	78.1	15.6	6.3
The training was well-structured and managed	90.6	3.1	6.3
The training had meaningful links with self-evaluation and ICT	62.5	28.1	9.4
The training was of good quality	93.8	0	6.3

Percentages may not add to 100 because of rounding

3.4 WHAT WORKED WELL

3.4.1 Introduction

Training participants were also invited to make comments about what worked well in the training. Sizeable majorities in each group did so. Most participants who provided comments referred to more than one aspect that worked well. Several made favourable overall comments without going into specific detail on any aspect while individual comments also included a wide variety of specific features that were not easily categorised. All three groups highlighted the active, participative nature of the training and the calibre of trainers, the variety of training approaches used, the use of videos and the illustration with practical examples. Others highlighted particular elements of the training that appealed to them, for example 'understanding relationships' or the 'restorative questions' or referred to logistical aspects such as venue, breaks or hand-outs. Frequent reference was made to a positive group dynamics and overall atmosphere.

3.4.2 Role Plays

Participants mentioned role plays most frequently, either using the term explicitly or referring indirectly to scenarios and similar activities. Among comments made were that participants usually hated role plays but found them really valuable this time, that they kept participants engaged, that they gave necessary practice and confidence, that they tested limits of applicability of the model and that there should have been more frequent use of them. Where role plays take place in simultaneous small groups, participants feel more comfortable as they don't feel under the same level of scrutiny by their peers. Many mentioned features such as 'positive modelling' and feedback from the group and trainers. A number appreciated the opportunity to be a participant and an observer. Some referred to role plays of specific aspects of RP such as circles or use of the restorative questions. The endorsement of role playing was common across all types of training.

3.4.3 Group Work

Work in smaller groups was mentioned most frequently by participants in the Getting Started training and summer courses, perhaps because the approach is used less in the Facilitation Skills training where participant numbers are often lower anyway. Among comments made were that participants felt more confident expressing opinions in the small groups, that they felt they were 'safe' and 'respectful', that they provided time for evaluation, that they 'kept you really involved and active', and that there was a good balance between the small and large groups. They liked the 'informal, relaxed style' of the small groups, although this was often said also about the training as a whole.

3.4.4 Working in Pairs

Working in pairs was highlighted by Getting Started participants, where it features most prominently. Most did not elaborate on the reasons for emphasising work in pairs but several mentioned it as part of the variety of approaches that they liked about the training. Others mentioned the opportunity working in pairs gave for practice.

3.4.5 Opening and Closing Circles

The opening and closing circles appealed to many participants, notably in the Getting Started and summer course groups. Comments include that they provided excellent modelling, practical experience and that they made it easy to engage and share. It seems likely that they contributed to generating the positive group atmosphere that very many participants mentioned, with one participant commenting that the 'circle work creates a good/ relaxing/ positive vibe'. Some mentioned circles in cryptic terms and were probably referring to other types of circle (e.g. 'role model experience of problems').

3.4.6 Discussion and interaction

Discussion and interaction within the group and with the trainers were highlighted frequently and were clearly valued across all three groups. Comments included that these features kept energy levels high, that they facilitated sharing of experience and hearing others' opinions, that they provided valuable insights in dealing with challenging situations and an 'opportunity to thrash things out'. Other representative comments were that discussion was 'very open' and that interaction was 'very worthwhile', even 'fascinating'. One Facilitation Skills interviewee commented that the training was very comprehensive and that the teachers learned a lot from each other as well as from the trainer (#FS5).

3.4.7 Trainers

Very positive comments were made by participants in all groups about the quality of trainers and responses tended to be more elaborate about trainers than other aspects. References were made, for example, to trainers being very open and approachable, friendly/warm, personable, humorous, open and honest, enthusiastic/passionate, engaging/involving, supportive and clear. Participants admired their training skills, depth of knowledge, experience, personal insights and belief in RP and also commented favourably on their awareness of the group dynamics and its energy levels and their ability to adapt accordingly. They praised their professionalism, commitment and encouragement. Where two trainers delivered the training together, comments included the ease with which they communicated, the team dynamic and the complementarity of experiences and styles. A Facilitation Skills interviewee, a teacher who was Year Head in a Tomar-supported school, said that she really enjoyed the training, the way it was delivered and the trainer's contributions (#FS6). A Summer Course interviewee appreciated that participants could stay back over lunch to ask questions and the trainers invited them to get in touch if they had any problems (#SC10).

3.4.8 Training Structure and Content

The structure of the training was commented on favourably, apart from dimensions already referred to. Positive comments across all groups referred to the mix of theory and practice, listening and doing, content presentation and discussion. In the words of one participant, this mix 'helped to make it relevant and understandable' and another welcomed that practical skill focus as a counter-balance to 'the heavy content'. Reference was also made by Getting Started participants to the opportunity to put ideas into practice between sessions and the importance of reflection on practice, with others also highlighting the two-half day format and one commenting that the 'second session was more successful'. A Getting Started interviewee emphasised the value of the second half-day to bring it all together (#GS7). In some schools, training was delivered in two-hour sessions, which one participant saw as an advantage, commenting that they were 'not too taxing'. Very many comments related to the variety of training methods used and how this assisted learning, keeping energy and interest levels high. Some recognised as positive factors the regular physical movement and energisers as well as comfort and meal breaks. The constant interaction with trainers has already been alluded to and is relevant here too. A number of participants referred positively to the remixing of small group membership during the training. Several signalled the training content, phasing, coherence and pace of delivery as working well. Others referred to the small or nice size of the group.

3.4.9 Videos

Videos are part of the variety of training methods used and the topic generated many positive comments. Comments included that they were 'excellent', 'inspiring' and 'really helped to engage and encourage 'best self''. Some referred to specific videos, liking for example the TED talk and Brené Brown material. Others liked the demonstrations of RP in schools and other settings, with 'real people who have used it'. One Getting Started interviewee said that one memorable thing for her, over a year after the training, was the Brené Brown video on blame (#GS12).

3.4.10 Practical Examples

Participants valued the use of practical examples from real world situations, supplemented by personal experiences of the trainers, in particular, but also fellow participants. A typical sentiment was that the examples given were very good. Participants who elaborated on their reasons liked the focus on hands-on experiences and how to adapt to real

situations. One Getting Started participant saw the fact that one of the trainers had a school background as something that worked well but this sentiment may very well be reflected in more generalised highlighting of the relevance of examples and experience.

3.4.11 Logistical and Presentational Aspects

Many participants alluded to logistical and presentational aspects of the training as things that worked well, usually without explanation or elaboration. These included venues, breaks, refreshments where provided, time management, handouts, and quality of slides. Many referred to the talking and listening pieces (including giraffe, teddy and beanball) as something that worked well ('made everyone feel included and increased the energy', 'allowed everyone to share their opinion and listen to each other').

3.4.12 Group Dynamics and Atmosphere

Frequent reference was made by participants to the positive group dynamics in both small groups and the large group and the overall training atmosphere. Among these were comments about feeling 'safe' and 'comfortable', having the opportunity to participate but without pressure to do so, early establishment of trust, a spirit of honesty and openness, a welcoming calm environment that 'made it easy to be part of the course' and group cohesion. A number of participants acknowledged the role of the trainers in bringing about the positive dynamic and atmosphere. Others referred in general terms to 'the group as a whole' without elaboration.

3.4.13 Adequacy of Training as Preparation for Use

Interviewees were asked if they felt that their training had adequately prepared them for using RP skills. All interviewees felt that it had, including those that were mildly critical of certain elements of the training. A number of Getting Started interviewees commented that under-use or non-use was down to themselves. Recommending the training to others was common. One teacher said that she just needed to get (re-)started and take a step back when under pressure and listen (#GS2) while another said that she got started straightaway a (#GS3). Another teacher remarked that the training would help colleagues learn quickly what it took him 15 years to learn the hard way (#GS10). Two Facilitation Skills interviewees said that the training had prepared them well and given them confidence, including one who was a member of the school's core RP team (#FS2) and one who had participated previously in non-CDI RP training but had not felt confident enough to use RP before (#FS4). One Summer Course participant attributed her use of facilitation skills entirely to the course, never having used them before (#SC1). A Deputy Principal felt that the course prepared her adequately and she left excited and enthusiastic (#SC6) while one of the teachers said that the course left her excited about RP (#SC7).

3.4.14 Overall and Miscellaneous Comments

Many participants who commented simply said that everything worked well or made endorsing comments such as 'I really enjoyed the course, would highly recommend', 'make available to all ... staff', 'great course/experience' and 'I have learned so much about RP, myself, my teaching and who I am and who I want to be'. Several participants made miscellaneous comments that did not fit easily into any of the categories above (e.g. 'post-its Day 2', 'restorative questions' and 'tools/framework to try out'), or and were sometimes difficult to interpret (e.g. 'communications', 'on point', 'the intervention worked well', 'resolutions' and 'strategies').

3.5 SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT

3.5.1 Introduction

Participants were invited in the course evaluations to make suggestions for improvement. Less than a third of participants in each group did so. This largely reflects the percentages expressing positivity about the course, although making suggestions does not of itself imply dissatisfaction with the course and several suggestions were in fact made

while specifically acknowledging satisfaction or indicating that the suggestions were minor quibbles. It should be noted that some participants made suggestions that ran counter to those made by others under this heading (e.g. longer versus shorter course) or to what others saw as working well (e.g. less use of circle time whereas a majority saw circles as positive).

3.5.2 Role Plays

Overall, participants tended to appreciate the practical nature of examples used in the training but several commented that they would like to see 'more difficult' or 'more real life' scenarios. For some at least this may relate to a sense that scenarios and the way they tend to be role played relate to situations of low resistance, conflict and animosity. Some participants called for more examples related to home, community and workplace with less focus on school, while others expressed a preference for more emphasis on schools (and in one case special schools). One participant suggested greater sharing of experience although this was already seen as a strong point by many others. Another suggested greater reflection and feedback. A couple of suggestions were simply for improved examples or role plays without elaboration as to the nature of improvements. A large number of Getting Started participants (24) suggested having more role plays or more time on them and with one suggesting more demonstration and one suggesting more role playing specifically on restorative conversations. A Facilitation Skills participant suggested more role plays of restorative meetings while two Summer Course participants would have welcomed more time practising circles and meetings where 'it doesn't go well'. One Getting Started interviewee felt that the role plays were not very relevant and would have liked role plays about more challenging situations such as dealing with colleagues who were sensitive, who had poor personal hygiene or who tended to treat women badly; she felt that subjects dealt with should be adapted to the participants (hers was a mixed group with no teachers but she said that the subjects were school-related) and that trainers should be flexible and be able to respond to suggestions from the participants (#GS5).

3.5.3 Course Content

A number of suggestions by Getting Started participants related to restorative language. Calls were made for greater clarity on feelings and emotions, more on non-violent communication and taking out descriptions of feelings as 'positive' or 'negative' (which terms may have been used but are not part of the course manual). Four participants asked for greater clarity on different aspects of the course – restorative questions, emotions, emotions versus feelings, circles. One Facilitation Skills interviewee also suggested a need to look at the feelings section of the training – what's a feeling, what's not – as colleagues found it hard to absorb this during her subsequent delivery of training (#FS8). One participant suggested more on shame and guilt. Two participants referred to the section on the relationship window and use of use of post-its, commenting that it 'did not work well' or it was difficult, without clear relevance to RP. One participant urged less time on ice-breakers, another less use of opening and closing circles, while others suggested more focus on 2nd level students and teenagers and gender issues. One participant would have liked more on the benefits of RP. One called for simpler language, commenting that it was 'a bit convoluted' and 'nuances were hard to follow' (e.g. as regards shame). One Facilitation Skills participant suggested inclusion at the start of how participants 'hold conflict' in their lives, while two others suggested, respectively, greater focus on asking open questions and evidence of effectiveness. Summer school participants made a variety of recommendations, including more time to discuss ideas and ask questions, more on 'RP buddies', more on planning RP use in a school, more on special education settings, more on introducing RP to parents, more on linkages to curriculum subjects, more demonstrations of meetings and conferences, less use of go-around circles and less theory. A specific suggestion was made about changing the warm-up activity on the first day. One Facilitation Skills interviewee said that she would have welcomed a focus on how to make RP work collectively where other teachers or management did not wish to use RP and a discussion on training students and parents (#FS2). One Facilitation Skills interviewee said that she would have welcomed more opportunity to practise conferences and meetings (#8). An SNA said it was a common complaint in her group that the training dragged out and had 'a lot of content' (#FS9).

3.5.4 Course Delivery

One Getting Started participant suggested dropping group work as a way to save time although four others specifically suggested more group work under the heading of 'suggestions for improvement' and group work was cited frequently under the heading 'something that worked well'. Three Getting Started participants and one Facilitation Skills participant did not like the use of a talking and listening piece, commenting that it could put people off contributing, should be dropped for large groups or that adults did not need it all the time; this view contrasted with other participants who saw it as something that worked well. Another participant did not like the use of the 'stars/stamps' exercise. Five suggested less frequent use of training notes by the trainer, which they found distracting or saw as nervousness; four of these references were to the same trainer, who was also highly praised by many others. One unusual and negative-sounding suggestion was 'use a facilitator who believes in RP' – the trainer's name was not entered and it was not possible from available data in the file to link the response to those of other participants on the same course. Another participant suggested less repetition and less contradiction, the latter referring to a specific named instance. One Getting Started interviewee made similar remarks about trainers appearing nervous adding that they seemed under-prepared and contradicted each other at times (GS5). Three suggested improved time-keeping notably as regards finishing on time and/or without rushing. One suggested a greater degree of walking about and standing-up discussion and three noted a need to control excessive talkers (including themselves). One Facilitation Skills participant suggested giving more information on size considerations for conferences before being asked to plan one. Another suggestion related the discussion during training about the feelings and needs of conference participants that is led by the trainer – it was suggested that this exercise would work better as a task for small groups. Two summer school participants recommended involvement of a primary school teacher to speak as a guest about their experience or to co-deliver the training. Another two recommended more active learning and more movement activities.

3.5.5 Group Composition

The responses under earlier headings reflect the different make-up of participants on different courses, with some groups made up predominantly or exclusively of teachers and others more mixed and with teachers in small numbers. Three participants commented on the diversity of their group. One non-teacher in a group dominated by teachers commented that 'a little diversity in the group has the potential to give a richer experience to the whole group. Almost everyone coming from the same discipline inhibits the learning opportunity'. In contrast, another participant 'found that being with so many other organisations made the content too general and too hard for everyone to relate to'. A third participant, not from a teaching background, felt 'uncomfortable with teachers and social workers'. One summer course participant thought it would be better to split primary and second-level teachers. Another suggested for a better gender balance.

3.5.6 Course Duration

The standard delivery of Getting Started training is two-half-days with a week in between for practice, but training was delivered in some settings (all of which were schools) in four two-hour sessions after school. Twenty-six Getting Started participants suggested variations in duration or timing. Most of these called for longer time or extra sessions for practice/role play or discussion or to allow for more (unspecified) material to be covered, or without elaborating on their reasons (beyond one participant saying he or she felt rushed). A number called for re-structuring, including running the course over four weeks instead of two or on one full day instead of two half-days, or adding a third half-day or one hour to each session or a fifth two-hour session. One commented that the course was excellent but that two hours was too short while another thought that two hours was too long and that six one-hour sessions would be better than 4 two-hour ones. Two felt that four hours together was too long/very intense. Others commented that the course could have been shorter (e.g. 'objectives could have been accomplished in less time', 'very dragged out, could be condensed'), while one felt that one session would suffice (adding that it was unfair to be obliged to attend). One deputy Principal commented that 'it would be nice if the course was given during school time with substitution'. Three summer course participants commented on course duration, one suggesting a shorter lunch and earlier finish, another suggesting shorter days and a shorter course overall to three days and a third suggesting longer breaks in the morning, shorter in the afternoon. A Facilitation Skills interviewee thought that the first part of the course could be halved and that two-hour tranches without a break were long, especially for those of her colleagues who had put in a full day prior

to the training (#FS1). An SNA said it was a common complaint in her group that the training would be better over 1.5/2 days rather than over five days of 2-hour sessions (#FS9).

3.5.7 Logistics

Several participants had suggestions about the venue. Some suggested a bigger room, while some found the room either too warm or too cold. Others found the training room a little noisy and found it difficult to hear when small groups were all talking at the same time. Three called for better equipment, with two commenting on a noisy projector and/or poor speakers. Two Getting Started participants commented that the quality of print of hand-outs was poor. One other called for distribution of hand-outs earlier and another for more information in advance of the course. A couple of participants suggested improved presentation of slides. Two called for provision of lunch or sandwiches. One found the fire drill distracting. A Summer Course participant echoed the call for early distribution of hand-outs and another suggested 'concrete materials to take home'

3.5.8 Videos

Five Getting Started participants suggested more videos, focusing on 'live example', 'positive practice' or TED talks. Two other participants, both teachers from the same group, found the fairness video involving capuchin monkeys cruel, upsetting and not really helpful. Four Facilitation Skills participants also exhorted more videos, with one suggesting practice oriented videos while seven Summer course participants did likewise. Of the latter, two recommended use of more up-to-date primary and secondary school material, one 'classroom RP', one with primary school examples, one circles and one use of 'videos of RP in action before role play'.

3.5.9 Further Training

Three Getting Started participants suggested further training for themselves, mentioning 'more training at a regular interval' or 'follow-up' training in a few months or 'to help keep going'. One from residential institutional background felt that joint management/staff training would be beneficial. Another called for greater focus on the school 'core' team and another for extension to include pupils. One Summer school participant suggested follow-up training on more difficult cases such as where children or parents refuse to engage or are in denial. Another suggested RP training for the Board of Management.

3.5.10 Overall and Miscellaneous Comments

A large number of participants across all three groups made general positive remarks only (22 in the Getting Started group, 2 Facilitation Skills and 13 Summer course). Typical of the tone were comments such as 'very good tool overall', 'really enlightening, challenging and stimulating', 'was very satisfied overall', 'really enjoyed the course' and the trainer 'is one of the best facilitators I have come across'. A number of other participants, all in the Getting Started group, made comments of a unique nature that are not included under the headings above and some of which are a little cryptic. These include comments such as 'assess personal situation', 'content was already known to us' and a suggestion to change the course title to make it more 'user-friendly'.

3.6. KEY MESSAGES

3.6.1 Introduction

Participants were asked to list one message that they had taken from the training. Nine out of ten participants across all groups gave a comment – significantly higher than under other headings. Their remarks were characterised by their variety and their individuality: very many topics were covered and most comments were elaborated upon in greater detail than for other headings (suggestions for improvement and what worked well). Most participants recorded a number of key messages rather than just one. Several participants simply commented on the quality and value of the course.

3.6.2 Blame, Shame and Guilt

A large number of participants, especially in the Getting Started group, commented on the need to avoid blaming and shaming, the importance of separating the person from their behaviour and the difference between guilt and shame. Comments included recognition that 'shame is crippling and inhibits change', 'shame (so negative for children)', 'reduce blame – we focus so much on it as a society' and 'we all have a Steve' (alluding to a Brené Brown video and having someone to blame). Some linked their comments to the importance of accountability and responsibility without blaming and, to a lesser extent, supporting people in the process of holding them accountable. Many highlighted the related concept of a problem-solving, solution-seeking focus as their key take-away message. Several alluded to the value of RP in conflict or discipline situations as an alternative to failed punitive approaches that in their opinion damage relationships and mental health. A number of participants, mainly teachers, highlighted that RP did not diminish the importance of accountability and responsibility (with comments such as 'this process does not take away consequences, it's about being fair', 'there is (sic) consequences', 'sanctions are ok') and some referred to taking responsibility themselves for their own actions (e.g. 'to listen and have more accountability for myself rather than issuing blame').

3.6.3 Listening

Many participants, across all groups, emphasised the centrality to RP of listening and communicating. Comments typically referred to the participant's resolve to listen, often linking it to the engagement and empowerment of parties and ideas such as letting others talk, giving a voice to students, being heard, 'encourage my pupils to say what they feel themselves' rather than make assumptions and listening and reflecting. Others mentioned aspects such as listening actively, speaking directly, clear and honest communication, patience and calmness. Several Getting Started participants emphasised the important of having an open mind with comments such as 'focus on what you know and do not assume', 'be willing to learn', 'leave preconceptions at the door', 'questioning before "launching attacks"', 'there are 2 sides to every disagreement and both sides should be listened to and understood' and 'know there is always a bigger picture'. Facilitation Skills and Summer Course participants also picked up on being non-judgemental and 'the importance of seeing the other person's point of view whether it is correct or not'.

3.6.4 Restorative Questions

Many Getting Started participants commented on the power of the restorative questions (e.g. they 'allow everyone to tell their side of the story and make them feel listened to', 'a format that can be easily followed to reach a resolution', 'they promote a sense of fairness') or on how to use them (learn them off my heart, ask what happened, never ask 'why', stick to the process, follow the formula, use in the right order). One teacher who had completed the Getting Started training group commented that 'It made [the pupils] feel good and I was less involved and so there was no judgement or blame'. Worryingly, perhaps, a number of Getting Started participants referred to 'the five questions' whereas there are in fact six. Almost a third of Facilitation Skills participants commented on the questions, emphasising the need to know them very well and using them correctly. Many recognised their centrality to the RP process (e.g. 'really do make all the difference', 'provide a pathway to fixing things and ... the basics for everything in RP', 'really help with [feeling] listened to'). Summer Course participants who commented tended to emphasise sticking to the script and not asking 'why'.

3.6.5 Building Relationships

Participants frequently mentioned building and maintaining relationships as a key message. Some simply stressed its importance, centrality and value while others elaborated on aspects such as building social capital for when things go wrong, basing relationships on honest and respectful conversations and fairness, creating cultures of mutual respect, and connecting with people. A number of Getting Started and Summer Course participants referred to 'only learning from those we like', drawing from a Rita Pierson video used in the training, and emphasised the longer-term value of investing time in building relationships. Some identified the building and maintaining of relationships as the essence of RP. Others emphasised the benefits of good relationships between students that ensued from modelling by teachers.

3.6.6 Emotional Intelligence and Restorative Language

For many participants, key messages related to emotional intelligence and restorative language. Many Getting Started participants highlighted aspects of emotional intelligence such as identifying needs and feelings, being aware of feelings, addressing emotion, being aware of their own feelings, and keeping facts and feelings separate. A large number mentioned aspects of restorative language such as modelling expression of feelings, using 'I statements', setting the tone of interaction, use of positive language, use to reinforce positive achievement, making doable requests and observing without judgement. Some noted that restorative language was at the heart of RP (e.g. 'it's all about restorative language') and made statements about a new personal awareness of language and a resolve to think about their choice of words and make change. Several teachers spoke about teaching restorative language to their students.

3.6.7 Calmness and Preparation

A substantial number of participants, straddling all three groups, highlighted the need for calmness in dealing with conflict either as parties involved or as facilitators. Several summarised their view with phrases such as 'calm is a superpower'. Many some noted that the course had taught them to 'wait', 'pause', 'take a breather', 'be patient' or 'step back' before reacting or judging. Several participants linked these messages to the need to prepare well for restorative interventions, to pick the right moment to intervene and to have clear intention.

3.6.8 RP Values

Many participants highlighted particular RP values that stuck with them. These included respect, non-judgement, objectivity, balance, understanding, empathy, compassion, honesty, empowerment, and consistency. Many of these observations were made in conjunction with other values or sentiments. Some commented that the values chimed with their own personal values. A large number of participants, mostly but not exclusively from the Getting Started group, cited ideas around fairness as their key message or one of their key messages, including listening to all sides, creating a safe space/explaining the process, referring to the 'Golden Rule, and the fairness elements of engagement, explanation and expectation clarity. Several mentioned related messages of inclusivity, expressing views such as 'the importance of [hearing] everyone's voice', 'give everyone a chance to tell their story', 'everybody needs to be heard no matter what; everyone gets their side out in the open; they get to hear other sides and feelings' and 'everyone deserves to explain where they're coming from'.

3.6.9 Miscellaneous

Other frequently-encountered key messages included the focus in RP on problem-solving and moving forward, having the courage to be vulnerable, taking time to be reflective, working 'with' rather than 'to' people, the coherence and integrity of the RP process, trusting the process and the applicability of RP to all aspects of life (e.g. 'it is an effective and game changing approach to how we deal with many issues not just in the school setting but in life', 'RP is a life skill not just for work'). Many participants referred again to the need for practice and a desire for further training while several referred as key messages to specific aspects of RP such as circles, conversations or buddies. Many made comments about the overall value of RP (e.g., 'RP works, it's a key tool to support a growth in new consciousness and way of life', 'this process provides an extremely valuable structure and format', 'it's a win/win situation', 'it's a fantastic approach'). Others used the opportunity to comment on the training (e.g. 'many thanks and very excited to put this to use', 'I can't speak highly enough of this training ... the rewards in terms of relationship building and conflict management are huge'). A small number of teachers reflected that they had been using RP for some time without realising it but, as against this, one teacher commented that 'I thought that I previously used RP in my teaching but now I know that I didn't'. Others spoke of the importance and/or challenge in extending RP throughout their organisation, mostly schools. A small number cautioned that people needed to buy into it before RP would work or that RP would not work with everyone, while one expressed a somewhat more optimistic view that 'it is still a success even if it does not change others'. It was very clear from the comments that the overwhelming majority of participants saw great merit in the restorative approach RP and had embraced it enthusiastically.

**ANTICIPATED USE
OF RP**

4



4.1 CONFIDENCE IN ABILITY TO USE RP SKILLS

4.1.1 Introduction

This section is based entirely on information supplied by participants at the time of training and recorded in the CDI database. Levels of confidence in using RP skills were very high for the Getting Started and Summer Course participants. The confidence in using RP skills for Facilitation Skills participants was lower but the figures are unreliable because of the small number of cases for which data were available. Comments about confidence fell into two broad categories: participants who felt confident already at the end of the course and those who felt they would feel more confident with practice. Many participants referred to specific aspects of RP (e.g. using restorative language and questions) or use in certain scenarios (e.g. with individual students or parents).

4.1.2 Confidence About Using RP Skills

Levels of confidence about using RP skills were very high. The percentage of participants in the Getting Started and Summer Course training saying that they were ‘confident’, ‘moderately confident’ or ‘very confident’ about using restorative language, working *with* people, observing fair process or having restorative conversations ranged from 91 to 98 percent. Those stating that they were ‘only slightly confident’ or ‘not at all confident’ ranged from 2 to 9 percent. Facilitation Skills participants, for whom information was available for only a small number of participants (9), expressed lower confidence levels.

Summer Course participants also indicated high levels of confidence for facilitating standard and fishbowl circles and restorative meetings and conferences. These ranged from 89 percent for conferences to 99 percent for restorative meetings. A comparison with scores for likelihood of facilitation (Table 4.1) shows clearly that participants were confident in their ability to facilitate events even where their expectation of actually facilitating them was low.

Table 10: Confidence in Using RP Skills

Confidence	Getting Started	Facilitation Skills*	Summer Course	All Training
Restorative language				
Confident or very confident**	92.9	88.9	95.3	93.2
Only slightly or not all confident	7.1	11.1	4.7	6.8
Working <i>with</i> people				
Confident or very confident	94.7	88.9	98.1	95.2
Only slightly or not all confident	5.3	11.1	1.9	4.8
Fair Process				
Confident or very confident	94.6	77.8	97.1	94.9
Only slightly or not all confident	5.4	22.2	2.9	5.1
Restorative conversations				
Confident or very confident	90.6	77.8	96.1	91.4

Confidence	Getting Started	Facilitation Skills*	Summer Course	All Training
Only slightly or not all confident	9.4	22.2	3.9	8.6
Standard circle				
Confident or very confident	-	-	98.1	-
Only slightly or not all confident	-	-	1.9	-
Fishbowl circle				
Confident or very confident	-	-	96.2	-
Only slightly or not all confident	-	-	3.8	-
Restorative meeting				
Confident or very confident	-	-	99.0	-
Only slightly or not all confident	-	-	1.0	-
Restorative conference				
Confident or very confident	-	-	88.7	-
Only slightly or not all confident	-	-	11.3	-

*Information available for only nine Facilitation Skills participants

** Includes 'moderately confident'

Excludes 'no response' cases.

Participants were invited to comment on their scores. Comments about confidence fall into two broad categories: participants who felt confident already at the end of the course and those who felt they would feel more confident with practice. Many of those expressing confidence claimed previous relevant experience and had their confidence boosted by the course. Most participants expressed enthusiasm to begin using or increase their use of RP but some were hesitant. Many referred to specific aspects of RP (e.g. using restorative language and questions) or use in certain scenarios (e.g. with individual students or parents). Many alluded to the confidence-building value of the practical exercises and role plays during training.

Teachers expressed greater confidence about using RP compared with non-teachers. This held true for all four RP skill sets measured (i.e. restorative language, restorative conversations, using fair process and working with others) and across both the 'All Training' and 'Getting Started' categories. See Table 4.2

Table 11: Confidence in Using RP Skills - Teachers/Others

Confidence	All Training		Getting Started	
	Teachers	Others	Teachers	Others
	n = 430	n = 194	n = 288	n = 173
Restorative language				
Confident or very confident*	60.2	49.4	54.6	48.8
Only slightly or not all confident	6.8	6.7	7.5	6.8
Working with people				
Confident or very confident	62.5	50.9	59.4	50.9
Only slightly or not all confident	4.8	4.7	5.8	4.8
Fair Process				
Confident or very confident	62.6	53.5	60.3	53.6
Only slightly or not all confident	4.8	5.9	5.1	6.0
Restorative conversations				
Confident or very confident	58.5	43.5	53.3	43.5
Only slightly or not all confident	7.0	12.4	7.7	12.5

* Includes 'moderately confident'

Excludes 'no response' cases

Tomar teachers expressed greater confidence about using RP compared with others (teachers and non-teachers). This held true for all four RP skill sets measured. This is a little surprising perhaps given that satisfaction with training was lower for the Tomar group. See Table 4.3.

Table 12: Confidence in Using RP Skills - Tomar/Others

Confidence	All Training	
	Tomar	Other
	n = 132	n = 492
Restorative language		
Confident or very confident*	58.3	56.7
Only slightly or not all confident	11.3	5.6
Working with people		
Confident or very confident	64.9	57.6
Only slightly or not all confident	9.6	3.6
Fair Process		
Confident or very confident	68.4	57.7
Only slightly or not all confident	9.6	4.0
Restorative conversations		
Confident or very confident	60.5	52.3
Only slightly or not all confident	12.3	7.7

* Includes 'moderately confident'

Forty-seven Getting Started participants expressed confidence with little qualification about needing to practise. The avowed level of confidence varied from 'quite', 'think I am', 'confident enough' to 'very' or 'fully', with many also just saying 'yes' or 'confident'. Several referred to a new or improved confidence (e.g. 'definitely more equipped now to tackle situations in a restorative way', 're-inspired') and many attributed their confidence specifically to the training and its practice nature (e.g. 'great practical use of questions', 'great to get opportunities to practice with fake scenarios', 'this practice has given me the confidence to implement RP daily', 'the roleplay was a fantastic way to understand'). Some referred more generally to having learned from the training (e.g. '[confidence] has grown through learning', 'I have been given all the tools I need', 'reinforcing a lot of normal practice but adding structure', 'thanks to the training I can adopt these practices'). Many referred to confidence in using particular aspects of RP, notably restorative language, questions and process, with a small number indicating a degree of hesitation (e.g. confident in relation to 'some of the skills'). Two commented on their perceived need to adapt the approach to their situation (e.g. 'I feel I will tailor it to my own way of working' (parenting specialist), 'elements of RP and the spirit of RP ... rather than exactly as presented' (special needs environment)). Some referred to confidence in using as part of a team or with individuals, parents, learners, staff and loved ones.

Eight of the 21 Facilitation Skills participants who provided observations expressed confidence about their ability to use their extended RP skills, attributing their confidence to the practical nature of the training (notably role plays, discussion, videos) and felt they now had the necessary tools to facilitate. Thirty of the 80 Summer Course participants who commented said that they were confident or more confident as a result of the training. Some emphasised confidence in particular skills more than others, notably regarding language, relationships, fairness, conversations, circles and meetings or various combinations of these. For example, not all expressed confidence about facilitating meetings and some stressed one or two aspects only; one participant specifically mentioned requiring support for dealing with more serious issues. Some spoke about starting with particular skills (e.g. structured fishbowls and circles, conversations and circles) as a way of developing confidence for other restorative interventions.

Ninety-one Getting Started participants referred to gaining confidence over time through practice. Many thought they would need practice on particular aspects of RP, notably conversations, language and questions, with several recognising that they would have to learn the questions off by heart. Several expressed resolve to use RP and persevering (e.g. 'definitely want to use', 'have to get over my fear of starting the conversation', 'must be open to learn new ways to solve old problems', 'first try was difficult but I will persevere as I see it is valuable'). Several thought that they would benefit from further role plays and three participants indicated an interest in further training. One participant thought mentoring would be valuable while another thought he/she would benefit from initial co-facilitation. One participant intended having visual prompts around the house.

Eleven felt their confidence would grow with practice. One referred to an ambition to be better prepared by 'forming a list of sub-questions for each question in order to elicit information'. Another expressed being 'OK with not being confident about conferences'. Two made general remarks – about switching from a mediation to an RP process and about the excellent quality of the training.

Thirty-four Summer Course participants noted the need to build confidence through practice, with a number relating their comment to specific aspects of RP. Some acknowledged nervousness about dealing with the unexpected or exposing themselves to vulnerability but also expressed determination to 'make it work' or 'give it a go'. Some took comfort from not being expected to have all the answers or be perfect first time, saying they were well equipped to handle things. Four participants referenced a desire for further or refresher training. Twelve participants made comments of a general nature such as complimenting the training or trainer or liking certain aspects of RP philosophy; one felt 'less confident regarding fair process as it can be hard to be fair'.

4.1.3 General Comments

Twenty-four Getting Started participants made remarks of a general nature that did not fit well with the above headings. Some commented on the value of particular aspects (e.g. RP framework, restorative questions and language) or particular attractions of RP (e.g. dealing better with conflict, confronting situations previously avoided, facilitating self-reflection and change of mind-set, RP 'shows compassion, understanding and a sense of fairness'). Some

comments hinted at or reflected reservations about personal ability or applicability of RP to all situations (e.g. ‘choosing a good time and place need to be considered’, ‘I hope to have the time and support when I need to use the practice’, ‘I am decidedly not calm enough for this in person’, ‘I would love to have the confidence to use RP’, ‘Starting will be biggest hurdle ... the RP ‘atmosphere’ will need to be widespread’, ‘knowledge of when where and how to use it’).

4.2 LIKELY USE OF RP SKILLS

4.2.1 Likelihood of Use

The vast majority of training participants said that they were ‘likely’ or ‘very likely’ to use RP skills for using restorative language, working *with* people, observing fair process and having a restorative conversation, with percentages ranging between 92 and 96 percent overall, if Facilitation Skills trainees are omitted. Most were ‘very likely’, with percentages ranging between 69 and 76 for this category. The lowest rate overall was for likelihood of having a restorative conversation (92%) but only 2 percent said that they were unlikely or very unlikely to do so. The Getting Started participants returned slightly lower values. The Summer Course participants returned the highest scores, with only one person saying that they were unlikely or very unlikely to use an RP skill (unlikely to have a restorative conversation). Information was available only in respect of nine participants in the Facilitation Skills training so the figures have to be treated with caution. The figures follow a broadly similar pattern to the other trainee cohorts but the percentage stating ‘very likely’ was lower, ranging from 56 percent for conversations and working with people to 89 percent for using fair process. See Table 13.

Additional information was available in respect of Summer Course participants. The additional information featured likelihood of facilitating standard and fishbowl circles and restorative meetings and conferences. Similar information was not available for the Facilitation Skills participants, although they received similar training.

The results are quite different from those for restorative language, working with people, fair process and restorative conversations:

- Just over three quarters said that they were ‘likely’ (32%) or ‘very likely’ (45%) to facilitate standard circles; on the other hand, only two percent said that they were unlikely or very unlikely with the remainder being uncertain.

Table 13: Likelihood of Using RP Skills

Likelihood	Getting Started	Facilitation Skills*	Summer Course	All Training
Restorative language				
Likely/very likely	94.7	100	99.1	95.6
Unlikely/very unlikely	1.5	0	0	1.2
Working with people				
Likely/very likely	93.7	100	97.1	94.4
Unlikely/very unlikely	1.7	0	0	1.3
Fair Process				
Likely/very likely	94.7	88.9	99.1	95.4
Unlikely/very unlikely	1.5	0	0	1.2
Restorative conversations				
Likely/very likely	90.6	88.9	97.2	91.8
Unlikely/very unlikely	2.4	11.1	0.9	2.3

Confidence	Getting Started	Facilitation Skills*	Summer Course	All Training
Standard circle				
Likely/very likely	-	-	77.2	-
Unlikely/very unlikely	-	-	1.9	-
Fishbowl circle				
Likely/very likely	-	-	53.8	-
Unlikely/very unlikely	-	-	16.4	-
Restorative meeting				
Likely/very likely	-	-	52.3	-
Unlikely/very unlikely	-	-	14.3	-
Restorative conference				
Likely/very likely	-	-	38.1	-
Unlikely/very unlikely	-	-	29.6	-

*Information available for only nine Facilitation Skills participants. Excludes 'no response' cases

Excludes those who were 'neutral' i.e. neither likely nor unlikely

- Just over half said that they were likely or very likely to facilitate fishbowl circles or restorative meetings, with those saying 'likely' outnumbering those who said 'very likely' by a margin of two to one; those 'unlikely' or 'very unlikely' amounted to 16 %and 14% respectively.
- Under forty percent said that they were likely or very likely to facilitate restorative conferences, with only five percent saying they were 'very likely'; thirty percent said that they were 'unlikely' or 'very unlikely'.

Some of the relatively low rates of likelihood may be attributable to the prevalence of primary teachers attending the summer courses and their belief that fishbowl circles, restorative meetings and especially restorative conferences are less relevant to primary level or their own position in their schools.

Teachers expressed greater likelihood of using RP skills than non-teachers in all four skill sets measured – using restorative language, working with people, applying fair process and having restorative conversations. This held true for both 'All Training' and Getting Started categories and was most marked as regards having restorative conversations, with a difference of ten percentage points. See table 14.

Table 14: Likelihood of Using RP Skills - Teachers/Others

Likelihood	All Training		Getting Started	
	Teachers	Others	Teachers	Others
	n = 430	n = 194	n = 288	n = 173
Restorative language				
Likely/very likely	97.8	90.4	97.5	90.2
Unlikely/very unlikely	0.7	2.4	1.1	2.4
Working with people				
Likely/very likely	95.5	91.8	94.7	91.7
Unlikely/very unlikely	1.0	2.3	1.4	2.4
Fair Process				
Likely/very likely	96.5	92.9	95.8	92.9
Unlikely/very unlikely	0.7	2.4	1.1	2.4
Restorative conversations				
Likely/very likely	94.7	84.7	94.3	84.5
Unlikely/very unlikely	1.8	3.5	1.8	3.6

Excludes 'no response' cases and those who were 'neutral' - neither likely nor unlikely.

There was little difference between participants from schools supported by the Tomar Trust and other participants as regards likelihood of using RP skills. Tomar teachers expressed slightly greater likelihood of using RP skills in two skill sets – using restorative language and having restorative conversations and slightly lower likelihood in the other two – working with people and using fair process. See Table 15. The gap between likelihood of using RP and confidence in doing so was smaller for Tomar teachers than for others.

Table 15: Likelihood of Using RP Skills - Tomar/Others

Likelihood	All Training	
	Tomar	Other
	n = 132	n = 492
Restorative language		
Likely/very likely	95.8	95.5
Unlikely/very unlikely	1.7	1.1
Working with people		
Likely/very likely	91.7	95.2
Unlikely/very unlikely	2.5	1.1
Fair Process		
Likely/very likely	95.0	95.6
Unlikely/very unlikely	1.7	1.1
Restorative conversations		
Likely/very likely	92.4	91.6
Unlikely/very unlikely	2.5	2.2

Excludes 'no response' cases Excludes those who were 'neutral' – neither likely nor unlikely

The percentages for likelihood of using RP skills were substantially higher than for confidence about using them for both teachers and non-teachers. The differences ranged from a minimum of 33 percentage points for teachers, for working *with* people, to a maximum of 43 percentage points for teachers, for using restorative language. The gaps were higher for the Getting Started cohort than for the All Training cohort, except as regards having restorative conversations. See Table 16. This means that many training participants, teachers and others alike, expect to use RP but are not confident about doing so. The gap in scores between likelihood and confidence may reflect natural caution or modesty on the part of trainees at the time of training and confidence could be expected to improve with practice and support. This suggests a possible need for greater practice during training and supervised/ supported practice in the workplace, with feedback. It also suggests that some trainees may be at higher risk of not using the full range of skills when faced with the pressures of the workplace because they lack the initial confidence.

Table 16: Likelihood and Confidence Regarding Use of RP Skills

	Teachers			Others		
	All Training			All Training		
	Likelihood	Confidence	Difference	Likelihood	Confidence	Difference
Restorative language	97.8	60.2	37.6	90.4	49.4	41.0
Working <i>with</i> people	95.5	62.5	33.0	91.8	50.9	40.9
Fair process	96.5	62.6	33.9	92.9	53.5	39.4
Restorative conversations	94.7	58.5	36.2	84.7	43.5	41.2
	Getting Started			Getting Started		
	Likelihood	Confidence	Difference	Likelihood	Confidence	Difference
	Restorative language	97.5	54.6	42.9	90.2	48.8
Working <i>with</i> people	94.7	59.4	35.3	91.7	50.9	40.8
Fair process	95.8	60.3	35.5	92.9	53.6	39.3
Restorative conversations	94.3	53.3	41.0	84.5	43.5	41.0

Source: Tables 4.5 and 4.2.

4.2.2 Location of Likely Use

Twenty-two Getting Started participants said that they were likely to use RP in both their work and personal life, with one school Principal expressing eagerness to get started and another participant identifying 'lots of opportunities'. Another ten said that they would 'embed RP in their daily use' which would on the face of it include work and personal life. Various others identified 'at home' or 'at work' but not both, and three said 'in life generally' without being specific. The 'at home' group included some who said that they would start there and one who expressed awareness that 'emotions get in the way at home'. Another participant commented about having used it with family and that 'it works well'. The largest volume of specific comments referred to use at work, amounting to 44 in total. Those who listed 'at work' group included 15 participants who identified use in youth clubs, with colleagues, in a housing complex, in a community group, as a support worker or in unspecified work scenarios. Twenty-nine participants referred to school usage and included staff who said that they would use RP with children, parents and staff or various combinations of these and others who referred to using RP to build relationships but, more frequently, for dealing with conflict, misbehaviour and bullying. Some said that RP was already being used but would be expanded or that a whole school approach was being adopted.

Similar headings came up in comments by Facilitation Skills participants as regards likely use in both personal and work life, at work and at home and work in conflict resolution (one mentioning conflict between children and staff as well as between children) and to address bullying. Almost all Summer Course comments referred to likely use at work, with some also expecting to use RP with family or in their own life; 14 participants mentioned use of RP to resolve discipline

or behaviour issues in the classroom or yard and nine participants wrote about using RP to change the school culture and atmosphere. A number anticipated use with a particular challenging pupil or class or with 'children who find it challenging to relate with others'. Several Summer Course participants expressed a desire to teach RP understanding and skills to their students. No negative comments were recorded by either group, perhaps reflecting the entirely voluntary nature of their participation.

4.2.3 RP Skills Likely to be Used

Thirteen Getting Started participants emphasised restorative language (including use of 'I statements', expression of feelings and emotional intelligence) with two anticipating its use in relation to behaviour incidents (including 'almost looking forward to next behaviour incident'). Another three mentioned relationship building and maintenance while four referred to the restorative conversations. Nine participants commented on the value of the restorative questions and framework ('very useful', 'valuable road map', 'involves personal responsibility'). Other occasional references were made to fairness, listening, empathy, reflection, separating the person from the behaviour and repair of harm. Several referred to use of RP in conflict resolution without elaboration as to setting.

A number of Facilitation Skills participants mentioned circles, meetings and conferences, with one participant identifying that he/she would need a co-facilitator before attempting a conference.

Summer Course participants were more specific about their likely use, with most mentioning more than one application. The most frequent reference in qualitative comments was to circles (33), primarily check-in and check-out circles. Comments included reference to use of circles for activities in addition to standard check-in/out such as teaching, planning, new topics, problem solving, conflict resolution, in small groups and as a large group). Some comments committed simply to having more circles while one participant acknowledged the time taken to facilitate circles but expressed determination to run them. Twenty-three participants stressed use of restorative language, with some specifying use in particular contexts such as in class, with family and adults, at staff meetings and dealing with disputes; others emphasised starting slowly, developing empathy in students, 'emotion vocabulary', thinking before speaking/ stopping before reacting and staying calm. Twelve participants mentioned likely use of restorative questions, while smaller numbers referred to meetings (4), relationships (4), restorative conversations (3) and RP buddies (3). Only one participant anticipated likely use of restorative conferences and even then commented that he/she would need more training.

4.2.4 Practice and Further Training

Several Getting Started participants committed to practice generally before they could specify where or how they would use it. Ideas included practice in relation to positive situations or colleagues first. One commented that it would 'take a lot of getting used to'. Five commented that they would welcome further training, including one who aspired to become a trainer and another who wanted to be confident in use of restorative language. Three recommended training for colleagues or fellow volunteers. A relatively small number of participants in the other two groups referred to their need or intention to practise. Four Summer Course participants referred respectively to the possible need for refresher training, teamwork to build confidence and an intention to learn more and research RP further.

4.2.5 General Comments

Many Getting Started participants made positive, optimistic comments of a general nature. These included comments such as 'very applicable to many areas of my life', '[use] very likely as it is easy', 'no reason not to', 'these are skills I will definitely use', 'wish I had trained in it many years ago', 'very useful in every aspect', 'challenging but worth it', 'definitely' and 'already trying to use'. Some comments displayed hesitancy or were more ambivalent about commitment, e.g. 'might be difficult to use with peers', 'as much as I can but difficult to remember', 'probably going to start slowly and build up' or 'most students are slow to come forward with answers'. One other negative comment was that RP was a 'wonderful idea in the right setting [but] this is not the correct setting'. Several other comments were more reflective and philosophical, sometimes cryptic (e.g. 'can see situations in a different light', 'let go of control', 'every student needs a champion', 'reflected on learning re an incident at work', 'should be taught at primary/planting

the seeds at an early age' and 'it will break down barriers between adult and child/being spoken to rather than at'.

Several Facilitation Skills participants made comments of a general nature such as 'certainly', 'highly likely', 'definitely', 'with everyone', 'with young people' and 'confident after more practice'; one saw possibilities to use RP working as a psychotherapist and in clinical supervision. Many Summer Course participants made similar remarks, including 'really looking forward to implementing RP in my teaching', 'feel empowered', 'lots of resources and I now feel comfortable to use', 'very keen to use' and 'see many possibilities'.

**ACTUAL USAGE
OF RP SKILLS**

5



This Section describes usage of RP skills as reported in the surveys and interviewees and gives insights into the context and circumstances of use, including what helped and hindered.

5.1 OVERVIEW OF USAGE

Usage of basic RP skills was higher and more frequent than usage of facilitation skills, as would be expected given the level of universality and informality associated with their use. The survey of Getting Started participants found that 68 percent used restorative language at least weekly, 82 percent worked with people, 64 percent used fair process and 50 percent had a restorative conversation. Sizeable minorities of Getting Started participants availed of restorative language, fair process and restorative conversations monthly, less than monthly or not at all. The survey of Facilitation Skills/Summer Course participants found that 85 percent used restorative language at least weekly and 55 percent had restorative conversations at least weekly. (They were not asked about working *with* people and fair process.) Thus, according to the surveys, usage of restorative language was higher among the Facilitation Skills/Summer Course cohort than for the Getting Started cohort, but broadly similar as regards having restorative conversations). See Table 17.

Table 17: Frequency of Use of Foundational RP Skills

Frequency of use	Getting Started				Facilitation Skills / School Course	
	Using Restorative Language	Working with People	Using Fair Process	Having Restorative	Confidence	Difference
Daily	29	25	18	18	40	20
Weekly	39	57	46	32	45	35
Monthly	21	14	14	25	0	35
Less than monthly	11	4	18	21	15	5
Not applicable	0	0	4	4	0	5
Total %	100	100	100	100	100	100

Total n GS=28, FS/SC=20; FS/SC participants were not asked about working with people or using fair process

As regards use of facilitation skills, the survey results for the Facilitation Skills/Summer Course participants show that just over a third facilitated standard circles daily or weekly and half did so at least monthly. Twenty percent said that they facilitated standard circles less than monthly and thirty percent said that circles were not applicable to their situation. A quarter said that they facilitated fishbowl circles at least monthly, a third less than monthly and forty percent said that such circles were not applicable to them. A quarter also said that they had facilitated restorative meetings at least monthly and thirty percent said less than monthly; close to half (45%) said that they were not applicable to them. No respondent reported facilitating restorative conferences monthly or more frequently and over half said that they did not apply to them, leaving 45 percent who said that they facilitated conferences less than monthly. See Table 18. As regards range of skills used, most interviewees used more than one technique, with frequent mention of standard circles and meetings but little evidence of personal use of fishbowl circles and conferences.

Table 18: Frequency of Use of RP Facilitation Skills

Frequency of use	Facilitating Standard Circles	Facilitating Fishbowl Circles	Facilitating Restorative Meetings	Facilitating Restorative Conferences
Daily	5	0	0	0
Weekly	30	10	15	0
Monthly	15	15	10	0
Less than monthly	20	35	30	45
Not applicable	30	40	45	55
Total %	100	100	100	100

Total n = 20

Several interviewees reported using RP in a range of settings – home, work and community, which is also clear from the survey results. However, the survey results show more frequent use of RP skills at work than at home or in community settings. See Table 19. The difference between settings was greater for facilitation skills than for basic skills. Some of the interviewees referred to use at work only and did not seem to think about use outside the work environment. School use tended to be with students and sometimes parents, with few using RP with colleagues.

Table 19: Frequency of Use of RP Skills by Location

Frequency	Getting Started			Facilitation Skills/Summer Course		
	Home	Work	Community	Home	Work	Community
Daily	18	29	0	15	35	10
Weekly	36	39	25	35	45	10
Monthly	21	21	14	25	20	25
Less than monthly	11	4	25	20	0	35
Not applicable	14	7	36	5	0	20
Total %	100	100	100	100	100	100

Total n = 28

The survey results provide a basis for comparing anticipated use at the time of training with actual use months later. However, the small survey size and questionable representativeness limit the reliability of comparisons. There were 28 responses for the Getting Started survey and 20 for the Facilitation Skills/Summer Course survey compared with 467 and 157 responses respectively for the training participants in the CDI database. Furthermore, there are questions over possible selection and response bias in the surveys (which were acknowledged in the methodology section). If training participants who were using RP were more likely to participate in the surveys, as seems plausible, then the results overstate actual usage. But the survey results, presumed overstated, may still yield useful information if they are lower than the levels of anticipated use at the time of training. This turns out to be the case for several skill sets.

There are two further complications to the comparison exercise. First, training participants were asked to indicate the likelihood of using various RP skills without reference to a time period, so the figures could include anticipated use quite some time in the future. The survey on the other hand measured current actual use daily, weekly, monthly or less than monthly (with a 'not applicable' category) and the category 'less than monthly' included no use at all. Second, information on anticipated use of facilitation skills was available for the Summer Course participants only and not for the Facilitation Skills participants.

The results for the Getting Started cohort show that anticipated and actual use were broadly similar as regards use of restorative language and working *with* people but noticeably lower as regards use of fair process and having restorative conversations. The size of the difference for these latter two skill sets suggest that actual use is indeed lower than participants anticipated. This is somewhat surprising given the wide scope for their use. See Table 20.

Table 20: Anticipated vs Actual Use of Foundational RP Skills - Getting Started Course

Getting Started	Anticipated		Actual	
	Restorative language	Likely / very likely	95	At least monthly
Unlikely / very unlikely		2	Less than monthly	11
Working <i>with</i> people	Likely / very likely	94	At least monthly	96
	Unlikely / very unlikely	2	Less than monthly	4
Fair Process	Likely / very likely	95	At least monthly	78
	Unlikely / very unlikely	2	Less than monthly	18
Restorative conversations	Likely / very likely	91	At least monthly	75
	Unlikely / very unlikely	2	Less than monthly	21

Anticipated (CDI database): n=467; Actual (Survey): n=28

The results for the Facilitation Skills/Summer Course cohort show that anticipated and actual use were broadly similar as regards having restorative conversations and noticeably lower as regards use of restorative language. Respondents were not asked about working *with* people or use of fair process. The size of the difference for use of restorative language suggests that actual use is indeed lower than participants anticipated. See Table 21.

Table 21: Anticipated vs Actual Use of Foundational RP Skills - Facilitation Skills/Summer Course

Facilitation Skills / Summer Course	Anticipated		Actual	
	Restorative language	Likely / very likely	99	At least monthly
Unlikely / very unlikely		0	Less than monthly	15
Working <i>with</i> people	Likely / very likely	98	At least monthly	-
	Unlikely / very unlikely	0	Less than monthly	-
Fair Process	Likely / very likely	96	At least monthly	-
	Unlikely / very unlikely	0	Less than monthly	-
Restorative conversations	Likely / very likely	95	At least monthly	90
	Unlikely / very unlikely	4	Less than monthly	5

Anticipated (CDI database): n=157; Actual (Survey): n=20

The Facilitation Skills/Summer Course survey also asked about use of four sets of facilitation skills as did the evaluation at the time of training. A comparison of results shows that actual use was substantially lower than anticipated and, again, the scale of the difference suggests that actual use was indeed lower than anticipated. See Table 22.

Looking at possible explanations for non-use or under-use of RP skills, a number of interviewees and survey respondents said that they had little opportunity to use RP. For several, this was because of completion of training late in the year, Christmas/New Year holidays and Covid-19 restrictions. One school (6 interviewees) experienced two incidents around the Christmas period which limited opportunities further. In another school, the uptake of RP was hampered by a school inspection and follow-up. A number of teachers attributed limited uptake to the simple fact that days were very busy.

Others cited change of jobs or schools as reasons for reduced opportunities. Seven interviewees said that they had limited opportunity to use RP because of their role; four were in learning/literacy support roles, two in management roles and one in a non-teaching role.

Table 22: Anticipated vs Actual Use of RP Facilitation Skills - Facilitation Skills/Summer Course

Facilitation Skills / Summer Course	Anticipated		Actual	
	Standard Circle	Likely / very likely	77	At least monthly
Unlikely / very unlikely		2	Less than monthly	20
Fishbowl Circle	Likely / very likely	54	At least monthly	25
	Unlikely / very unlikely	16	Less than monthly	35
Restorative Meeting	Likely / very likely	52	At least monthly	25
	Unlikely / very unlikely	14	Less than monthly	30
Restorative Conference	Likely / very likely	38	At least monthly	0
	Unlikely / very unlikely	30	Less than monthly	45

Anticipated (CDI database, Summer Course): n=106; Actual (Survey, Facilitation Skills/Summer Course): n=20

For some of these, this may have reflected an understanding of RP and its association with formal processes, since they went on to describe substantial RP usage. This included a school Principal who described regular usage in informal contact with students on the corridor and elsewhere and everyday use with staff (#GS11). A non-teaching participant said that she did not encounter conflict very often but thought she might be 'using RP unconsciously' (#GS12). One teacher admitted that she had occasions when she could have used it and wished that she had – she said that she 'didn't stop to think' (#GS2). Another teacher concluded that she just needed to recognise opportunities and remember to do it more (#GS8). A teacher noted that there were opportunities to use standard circles but that, while she had not availed of them, she was open to using them in future (#FS1).

Lower use than anticipated is also likely to be explained by the common experience of failure of initiatives that involve change due to insufficient attention to implementation challenges. This 'implementation gap' is discussed during the training and trainees are encouraged to think through how they want to use their RP skills and what supports they might need. At the individual level, best practice is seen as including reflective practice and peer support. At the organisational level, it includes an implementation team, logic model and implementation plan. Opportunities to adopt this best practice were not available to all training participants. Those interviewed identified several factors that helped and hindered usage, discussed below, and these suggest further explanations for under-use.

The evidence does not suggest that the training did not prepare participants adequately for use. All interviewees stated that it had and confidence levels about use were very high

5.2 USAGE AT HOME

The surveys asked about use of RP skills in different settings without differentiation as to type of RP skill. Just over half of all survey respondents said that they used their RP skills at home, with little difference between the training cohorts. Just over half (54%) of Getting Started trainees said that they used their RP skills at home at least weekly and three quarters (75%) at least monthly. A very similar pattern emerged from the survey of Facilitation Skills/Summer Course participants. Six survey respondents overall (13%) said that they used their RP skills less than monthly, which could indicate no use in the absence of a specific category in the survey questionnaire to cover no use. See Table 23.

Table 23: Frequency of Use of RP Skills at Home

Frequency	Getting Started		Facilitation Skills/Summer Course	
	%	Cumulative	%	Cumulative
Daily	18	18	15	15
Weekly	36	54	35	50
Monthly	21	75	25	75
Less than monthly	11	86	20	95
Not applicable	14	100	5	100
Total %	100		100	

Total n: GS = 28, FS/SC = 20

The interviews gave insights into experiences of using RP skills at home. Many interviewees said that they used restorative language and had restorative conversations with **young children**. One interviewee said that she had found using RP made a big difference with her 6-year-old to whom she had been saying ‘Stop’ constantly but was now using the RP questions (#FS2). On the other hand, another interviewee suggested that use with under-7s was unlikely to be effective as they lacked the ability to be empathic (#GS1). Another said it made her children think differently about things despite not being well placed to express feelings (#SC8). One interviewee commented that her use with her children chimed with what she was reading on respectful parenting (#SC13). One teacher said that she definitely used RP with her own children and was less into blaming or making them uncomfortable (#FS6).

Other interviewees reported use with **older children and teenagers**, including one interviewee who used it in a long-distance conversation with two teenage relations abroad (#GS13). One interviewee said that she had used RP with her sons, particularly one who was doing examinations and lacked motivation and application (#FS1).

Several interviewees reported use with **adults** at home. One interviewee said that she used RP with her grown-up daughters, who remarked on her evident different approach (#GS13). One interviewee said that she had used RP with her siblings when occasional conflict arose over issues of parental care (#FS1). One interviewee reported using RP with her husband (#SC5) while another reported having restorative conversations, with good results, with her housemate (#SC7).

Usage of facilitation skills at home was much more limited. One interviewee said that he had used ‘the RP/circle approach’ at home (#SC4). Another said that she had facilitated a restorative meeting between her husband and son and commented that her son found it easier because he knew he would be listened to (#FS2). Some interviewees remarked that they were less inclined to use RP skills at home. One interviewee reflected that he was probably less restorative at home than at work (#GS14) and another simply said that she would not really use RP at home (#FS5). One said that she tried to use restorative language at home but did not persevere, without elaborating on why (#SC1).

The **use of basic RP skills at home** appears somewhat low given that the skills are at the informal, universal end of the RP toolbox and are practised on the course. It may be that use is under-reported because, when asked about use, people think of more formal use in conflict situations. It may be too that the skills have been internalised by people and they are unaware of their use, or that they don’t see applicability in the home setting. However, a key objective of the training is to get people to use their skills in a consistent, conscious way across all settings and that does not seem to be the case in the home setting.

5.3 USAGE AT WORK

5.3.1 General

All interviewees from all three cohorts reported using RP at work. Most used it regularly and systematically while others had begun using RP but were still somewhat tentative in their use. The survey results show somewhat more frequent use of skills for the Facilitation Skills/Summer course participants than for the Getting Started group. Four out of five respondents (80%) in the Facilitation Skills/Summer Course cohort used RP skills at work at least weekly and all respondents in this group reported use at least monthly. This compares with 68 percent and 89 percent respectively for the Getting Started group. See Table 24.

Table 24: Frequency of Use of RP Skills at Work

Frequency	Getting Started		Facilitation Skills/Summer Course	
	%	Cumulative	%	Cumulative
Daily	29	29	35	35
Weekly	39	68	45	80
Monthly	21	89	20	100
Less than monthly	4	93	0	-
Not applicable	7	100	0	-
Total %	100		100	

Total n: GS = 28, FS/SC = 20

Some Getting Started participants alluded to **use of RP skills beyond those instructed** on their course. A primary teacher spoke about her use of circles and meetings (#GS3). One teacher of 5th and 6th year students said that he sometimes did restorative work with groups of 2-3 and would use circles (#GS10). A non-teaching participant said that she used circles with her network of clients but had taken the technique from her previous career (#GS12). The training may have made some Getting Started participants more aware of RP opportunities, with, for example, one teacher asking a colleague to facilitate a meeting between her and two boys (#GS8).

Some commented on the **use of the restorative questions**. A teacher who was a Year Head declared that she used RP daily with her own class, tending to stick to the structure and wording of the restorative questions in more formal situations and more loosely in informal contact in the corridors (#FS6). Her colleague, participating in the same interview, said that staff were probably using RP approaches all along but the default was 'why' and you had to check yourself against falling back into it; you also had to calm things first; he would go through the questions with students 1:1 and you would see them thinking about it (#FS11). Another secondary teacher also felt that she was probably using RP all along without realising it – she would always have tried to see the student's point of view and the training was a confirmation of her values; she observed that using the restorative questions 1:1 took the emotion out of it for both sides (#SC5). One Facilitation Skills interviewee said that she used restorative language regularly with her Leaving Cert Applied students and that using the RP questions helped in a number of situations and made the channels of communication easier (#FS1). A primary teacher reported that she used the restorative questions every day, in the yard and in her class, and that the pupils were familiar with the questions and trust in the process had built up; she highlighted that a grey area for them was where things happened outside school and were brought into school (e.g. messages on social media) and they were asking about what happened off-site and what people were thinking at that time (#SC9). One interviewee observed that she had forgotten the exact wording of questions through not using them; she had tried the process by looking at the card with the restorative questions but the conversation had not been fluid or natural (#GS2).

Another teacher reported that **restorative conversations** with students were regular and that other teachers were using RP too – she frequently heard teachers talking to pupils in the corridor asking question 6 (#SC11). One Youthreach

co-ordinator had restorative conversations all the time with students who he said often acted in the heat of the moment; his experience was that the students were generally happy to be heard (#GS14). A primary teacher reported having a restorative conversation with a challenging child where she signalled the questions in advance (#GS3).

A small number of interviewees gave examples of using RP to **reinforce positive behaviour**. One teacher said that she used the questions every day in 1:1 conversations and that restorative language was second-nature to her now and that she used RP in positive as well as negative situations (#SC3). A Deputy Principal reported using her RP skills every day, not necessarily in conflict situations (#SC6). One primary teacher used restorative language to build relationships in a sixth class that was a mixture of kids from two different classes, with many anxious about the new environment; she said she expected resistance but the kids were curious about how it worked and were very open to using it (#SC1).

Others used their RP skills to **challenge specific behaviour**. One new teacher said that she used RP on one occasion to express her frustration and need for quiet so that she could get her lessons across; she said she used 'aspects of RP' in every class, using the restorative questions informally; she had also had a restorative conversation with one student (#GS8). One non-teaching participant used it with a team to which she was newly appointed and had a restorative conversation with one colleague whose demeanour tended to set the tone for everyone for the day (#GS5). A primary teacher said that she modelled restorative language by, for example, explaining that she was unhappy with particular behaviour (#SC7).

A number of interviewees spoke about using RP with **difficult groups**. The teacher of 5th and 6th year students mentioned previously said that a lot of the boys were "very troubled and challenging" and that he encountered "a lot of conflict in class", often brought in from the outside the school; he checked in with the students regularly, including about their feelings, which would be alien for many; in 1:1 work with students he said that he did not use the restorative questions formally, although he would have them in mind (#GS10). Another interviewee said that students she had used RP with, some of whom would be from a 'fairly rough' background, liked the questions (#FS2). A Family Support Worker mentioned one primary school where she had a conversation with a pupil who was in difficulty for not paying attention and encouraged him to explain to the teacher that he was coming to school very tired because of difficulties at home; she also encouraged the teacher to give him space (#FS4).

Other interviewees reported use in relation to **serious incidents**. A Youthreach co-ordinator had used RP in relation to a number of more serious incidents, including a conversation with a student who agreed that he should be suspended for two weeks and a separate conversation with the harmed person, also a student, who agreed that a restorative meeting between the parties was not needed (#GS14). One Facilitation Skills interviewee said that she had used RP in relation to an incident where 5-6 students had pulled a prank in the engineering lab: she used the questions in 1:1 conversations with the students and got their side of the story – this showed that the incident and their intentions were not as bad as were initially thought (#FS1). A primary teacher reported having a meeting with seven pupils who had been fighting with another child in the yard; she commented that the incident had been dealt with much more promptly than normally and use of the restorative questions had generated considerable information and helped get to the bottom of the matter (#GS3).

Regular use of RP skills was not limited to any **professional background**. One interviewee used RP skills as a school attendance officer, as a student support worker and with a homework club (#GS13). A Guidance Counsellor reported daily use of RP in her own class and in counselling sessions (#FS5). An SNA in a DEIS school reported using the questions on a 1:1 basis with students if she saw incidents in the corridors; she said that she and SNA colleagues get a chance to build relationships with the students and gain good insights into why boys might react on a given day (#FS9). A non-teaching participant working with children aged 7 or under used RP with children, parents and staff (#GS7). A Family Support Worker reported that she had brought the RP questions into parenting programmes that she ran (#FS4).

Some interviewees referred **to use of RP with colleagues** although several teachers said that they would be reluctant or had little opportunity to do so. One non-teaching interviewee said that she used RP with colleagues, all of whom had been trained in RP (#GS13). One Youthreach co-ordinator used RP regularly with both colleagues and students (#GS14). A Deputy Principal reported using her RP skills every day with colleagues as well as pupils (#SC6). A Principal said that he had restorative 'conversations' regularly with students along the corridors and with teachers too (#FS10). On the other hand, a Guidance Counsellor she said that she would 'shy away' from using it with colleagues (#FS5)

and others said that they 'would not be inclined to use it with colleagues' (#GS2) or would 'shy away' from using it with colleagues (#FS5). One said that their colleagues would be reluctant to use RP or were 'set in their ways' (#SC13). Another said that she would love to try with a particular cohort of teachers but would be 'terrified' to confront them through RP (#FS6). A number of interviewees said that conflict with colleagues was rare but the RP training helped relations nevertheless. One teacher who did not use RP in a structured way with colleagues said that the training had made her more aware of her language in interacting with them (#GS3). Another said that she would not encounter conflict very often at work but when she did she always asked 'what happened?' (#GS4). Another teacher reported that she had facilitated a number of restorative meetings with staff; she cited two cases, one where a colleague had asked her to facilitate a meeting with the Principal, with both buying into it and with great success; the Principal then asked her to facilitate a meeting between two teachers and again the meeting was a success; this had great demonstration effects and showed that RP could resolve issues with specific outcomes; a third case did not proceed as one teacher did not wish to engage and left (#SC11).

5.3.2 Restorative Circles at Work

Interviewees gave many examples of using **standard circles for check-ins and check-outs**, all in school settings. A PE teacher said that she used circles with a check-in in every class (#FS2). A Guidance Counsellor reported using circles regularly, having always used them; ten was her ideal circle size but she also used circles with classes of up to 18; she used desk-bound circles where necessary (#FS5). A teacher said that she had used circles mainly with 1st years, for whom she was Year Head (#FS6). A Deputy Principal said that she used circles daily with 1st and 3rd year students, mainly for check-ins and check-outs and things like developing a contract of how they would work together (#FS7). A primary level teacher said that she used standard circles where she could, 'where the students were receptive'; she would have about 18 in her circle; she had tried circles with her junior class, some of whom were very needy, but it had not worked very well (#FS8). A Principal said that he had not used circles although he saw potential in a few situations, including dealing with issues of concern to parents (#FS10). Another primary teacher said that she used circles every Thursday afternoon and found them really positive, great for the quieter children and good at managing two kids who are on the autism spectrum; she said she started with a different child each time, strategically selecting a good talker to start, a more disruptive child in the middle and a quieter child towards the end; she used circles to build relationships, teach empathy and listening skills and also to deal with issues (e.g. friendship) that she might see or that children raise with her (#GS3).

Most Summer Course interviewees used circles regularly. One used circles twice a week, combining go-around and popcorn approaches, but also did daily check-ins as regards feelings and energy; she got started straightaway after the training (#SC1). One teacher said she used circles with her 5th and 6th class pupils every Tuesday when it was scheduled as part of the timetable; she said that she starts with an ice-breaker and throws out a few questions, e.g. yard issues; she has a couple of pupils that she described as 'trouble-makers' but they accept the rules when reminded of them; she said that the kids liked RP (#SC2). Another primary teacher reporting doing some circle work with her class of senior infants, mainly about what makes them sad, happy, etc. and general issues; she did not use a talking piece as they were good at taking turns at that age' she was also asked by two colleagues to hold circles with 3rd class and 6th class pupils, which she did once or twice a week over 5-8 weeks (#SC7). One learning support teacher said that she used check-in circles with her groups every week and found it a useful way to ground them after yard excitement (#SC3). A post-primary teacher referred to using circles with a Transition Year personal development group and explained that they use a talking piece to facilitate what they called Friendship Circles (for building relationships) and Trust Circles (for discussing sensitive topics) (#SC5). Another primary teacher used circles even though it required being held in a larger music room or after PE; she uses circles for check-ins and for feedback about the lesson; she said 'some of the kids would be tough enough but they responded well'; she used it every week initially but it fell away to once every couple of weeks (#SC8).

One interviewee said that she would do a circle with the kids after a yard incident and they filled out reflection sheets; she also used circles every morning with a senior primary class that she took as a substitute; she observed that occasionally a pupil would stand out of the circle or refuse to fill in a reflection sheet, which was allowed; her response would be to talk it out separately with the pupil; she felt that the pupils felt valued and validated in the process (#SC9). A primary teacher with a very young class said that she used circles 2-3 times a week for check-ins; she started out the

current year with an amalgamation of two groups and used circles so that they would get to know each other; they loved the games, were interested in each other and focused on the person talking; it was very helpful later in the year in integrating a new pupil from overseas; she keeps topics general; she said that her usage was more sporadic at the end of the year (#SC10). Another primary teacher said that circles were common in all classes and were in use prior to the training (#SC11).

A secondary teacher reported using standard circles with his Transition Year group, partly to welcome and bed in new and overseas students; his first circle was in week 1 and they talked about plans for the year and introduced themselves – they also played the 'Big Wind' and it was a big success; he used the circle again a couple of weeks later to check in about how they were getting on. He also used what he called a popcorn circle to deal with an incident where an overseas girl student was jeered over Covid-19 by a group of boys playing football. She attended the circle with a supporter; she felt that it was very worthwhile and that she had got her dignity back. He subsequently facilitated a meeting between her and one boy who had taken personal responsibility (#SC12). A primary teacher reported facilitating standard circles twice a week initially with her class of 10-11 year-olds but she had let RP drop by the wayside in the face of bad attitudes by many of the pupils and an excessive number of incidents; she would have the same class next year and intended resuming with RP (#SC14).

Interviewees gave occasional examples of using **standard circles for problem-solving purposes**. One teacher reported co-facilitating two problem-solving circles: the first circle related to bullying and was with 1st year students; it worked really well and they decided to run one with 2nd year students (#FS3). A teacher said that she had used circles mainly with 1st years, for whom she was Year Head, but had also used it with one 3rd year group at the request of a colleague; she had used it as a problem-solving circle with the older group, but without the empty chair structure, getting them to rate the group behaviour and rate themselves individually; the result was positive in her opinion; a proposed circle with boys and their parents about not getting involved in a school Traveller project had not taken place because of COVID 19 (#FS6). A PE teacher said that she would not have many opportunities for problem-solving circles (#FS2). One respondent said that she had been very impressed with fishbowl problem-solving circles in the training but did not report any use of such circles since; the circles enabled participants to overcome shyness and ask for and give advice, including male colleagues who were not normally talkative; she commented that the role playing with her colleagues had been 'eye-opening' and they saw each other differently and appreciated that people had different takes on things (#FS1). A Deputy Principal said that she had not done any fishbowl problem-solving circles yet although a colleague did and it hadn't work; she thought that there was a lot of blaming and the class were probably not ready for it; she discussed using fishbowl problem-solving circles with staff but they preferred using standard circles instead (#FS7). One teacher who was a regular user of standard circles said that she had not facilitated problem-solving circles yet (#FS8, #SC10). Another teacher said that she had used circles for problem-solving, including one case where a pupil had disclosed privately that she felt bullied and they discussed how to make people feel welcome in the group (#SC2). A primary teacher said that she had ruled out fishbowl circles as inappropriate for her senior infant group (#SC7). A post-primary teacher used what he called a popcorn circle to deal with an incident where an overseas girl student was jeered over Covid-19 by a group of boys playing football; she attended the circle with a supporter; he subsequently facilitated a meeting between her and one boy who had taken personal responsibility (#SC12). A primary teacher said that she had tried a problem-solving circle but people had not taken responsibility (#SC14).

No interviewees claimed to have used **fishbowl circles**. One interviewee said that a fishbowl circle was considered in one situation that she was involved with but was not ultimately used (#FS4). Another referred to unsuccessful use of problem-solving circles by colleagues who had not been trained in RP (#SC6).

5.3.3 Restorative Meetings at Work

Most interviewees recounted experiences of facilitating meetings at work, all in schools. A number used the terms 'restorative meeting' (i.e. facilitated meeting) when 'restorative conversation' (i.e. one-to-one meeting) was more accurate and some used the terms interchangeably.

One respondent said that she had not facilitated meetings herself but said that a meeting co-facilitated by a colleague and the course trainer had been noted with interest by many in the school (#FS1). A teacher who was a member of her

school's core RP team had co-facilitated five restorative meetings that involved two students each; it was decided that no parents needed to be brought in but she spoke to parents over the phone, before and after the event; the students themselves were offered the opportunity to deal with the matter through RP and had bought into it; one other student had not availed of RP and had since left the school (#FS3). A Family Support Worker reported that she had initiated a meeting to deal with conflict between two students in a secondary school, sensing some tension and unhappiness between them; she reported that it had all been very natural and worked really well; she had used RP questions in other schools also in situations involving two students (#FS4). A Guidance Counsellor reported doing 'mediation work' between teachers and students maybe once or twice a month; she also referred to frequent use of RP with a group of 3-4 students who were friends but had frequent conflicts – she thought RP helped to teach them to communicate (#FS5).

One interviewee – a Year Head – reported that the course trainer had facilitated a meeting between her and a 5th year student with whom she had 'lost the cool' and was 'at loggerheads' and that she had learned a lot from experiencing this; she had participated in a total of four meetings with the course trainer as external facilitator, including with a teacher and two students (#FS6). A Principal said that she would typically meet students a couple of days after an incident and she tried to use RP instead of the 'good cop/bad cop' approach used in the past; she said that staff still tended to think about blame and fault and she wanted a change, pointing out that RP wasn't about 'getting away with it'; she continued that the boys knew where you were coming from and what was coming next although they generally found it difficult to express feelings; she added that the last question 'what do you think needs to happen next' was a really good one and often caused difficulty, especially for younger boys, and required prompts (FS12).

A Deputy Principal had facilitated restorative meetings frequently, for both student-student and student-teacher encounters, mostly with junior cycle; the 1st years took really well to it; as regards student-teacher meetings, she talks to students beforehand; the meetings have dealt primarily with persistent misbehaviour (#FS7). A teacher from the same school reported that she had used RP in a meeting with two students and referred some issues to the care team as a result; she had had separate preliminary discussions with both; she also referred to having a 'restorative meeting' (more correctly a 'restorative conversation') with a 2nd year student who was challenging her authority (#FS8).

One primary level teacher had facilitated four restorative meetings between pupils, three successfully and one unsuccessfully (where one party was not ready); two meetings involved two pupils and two involved 3-4 pupils; she commented that while meetings were more difficult, the questions worked really well to get parties started; she found that victims were sometimes a bit afraid to be very open or of hurting others' feelings and needed encouragement (#SC1). Another said that she had facilitated meetings but the occasion or need did not arise very often; one incident involved a 'rumpus' between two 1st and 2nd class pupils and she took them in to her room for a meeting which was 'very positive' (#SC2).

A Deputy Principal who headed the primary school's behaviour team reported having restorative 'conversations' with one, two or more pupils; as an example, she mentioned an incident involving four students whom she met individually and collectively (#SC6). A primary teacher said that she had restorative meetings/conversations regularly as there were frequent fights in the yard and in class; she speaks to each individual and then collectively; she said that the kids had got the hang of the questions fairly quickly; she had followed up a serious bullying case (where a group wrote something nasty about another girl who did not know about it and hence was not involved); the relevant girls were reprimanded formally by the Principal, with parental involvement; she offered the girls restorative conversations, with the agreement of the Principal; she made it clear that it was not part of the punishment and was voluntary; she spoke with each girl individually and one asked to have more than one meeting; she said that it worked very well (#SC7).

A primary teacher said that she would have restorative conversations with 1-3 kids in class or the yard, taking them aside to go through the questions and that it worked well (#SC8). Another primary teacher said that she had occasionally facilitated restorative meetings/conversations, usually after a yard incident; her experience was that, it helped her get to the bottom of things even where she thought she knew what had happened, leading in one case to her apologising to one girl where she had made a false assumption; she would ask each child involved about an incident and then speak to them altogether using the restorative questions (#SC10).

A post-primary teacher reported facilitating a number of meetings, including a meeting that he initiated over an incident between a teacher and a student; the normally well behaved boy had lost his cool and the teacher had cried in front of him and wanted to reclaim her position; they held the meeting after the boy had been given time to calm down in the study room and both felt that the meeting resolved everything; another proposed meeting did not proceed after separate initial meetings with the parties since it was clear that the harm doer was not remorseful (#SC12). Another primary teacher said that she had not facilitated any restorative meetings and that not many had taken place in the school, which was nevertheless committed to RP throughout the school (#SC13).

5.3.4 Restorative Conferences at Work

Eight interviewees were explicit in saying that no conferences had taken place while it was implicit in the evidence of many others. One Deputy Principal said the school had not organised any conferences but she could see merit in them even where a student was being expelled or suspended, to provide context and to be heard (#FS7). An SNA said that she has not been involved in conferences but thought that SNAs would have a lot to contribute and at least they would be up to speed with the child’s reaction to the conference (#FS9). A Principal said that the school had had a few conferences but he was not sure whether he should designate them as such – they typically involved two students, two parents and maybe a Deputy Principal as well as himself (and it was not clear to the interviewer whether the events involved conflict between students or joint misbehaviour) (#FS10).

5.4 USAGE IN THE COMMUNITY

Reported usage of RP skills in the community was modest. The surveys showed that 25 percent of Getting Started participants used their RP skills in the community at least weekly as did 20 percent of Facilitation Skills/Summer Course participants. Daily use was rare. Less than half in both groups, 39 percent and 45 percent respectively, used their RP skills less than monthly (which could include no usage). Curiously, the percentages saying that use in the community was not relevant to their situation were high – more than a third of the Getting Started cohort and a fifth of the Facilitation Skills/Summer Course cohort. See Table 5.6.

Table 25: Frequency of Use of RP Skills in the Community

Frequency	Getting Started		Facilitation Skills/Summer Course	
	%	Cumulative	%	Cumulative
Daily	0	0	10	10
Weekly	25	25	10	20
Monthly	14	39	25	45
Less than monthly	25	64	35	80
Not applicable	36	100	20	100
Total %	100		100	

Total n: GS = 28, FS/SC = 20

Consistent with these survey results, interviewees provided few examples of using RP in the community. Several commented that they did not experience of conflict in the community and little occasion to use RP. A primary teacher said explicitly that she not had opportunities to use RP in the community (#SC7) while other respondents were silent on the issue. One Facilitation Skills interviewee said that she would not really use RP in the community (#FS5).

Four interviewees referred to use of RP skills in sporting settings, one when coaching young soccer players (#GS14) and another in her role as co-ordinator of her local GAA u/16 team (citing one specific incident) (#FS1). Two others mentioned unspecified use in the GAA (#FS4) and an offer to facilitate in a football club which had come to nothing (#FS8). One teacher commented that he would use RP occasionally in organisations he was involved with (#FS11) while

a non-teaching interviewee had had a restorative conversation with a fellow member of a community group (#GS1). A JLO said that he used RP every day and tried to use it at home, at work and in the community; he expressed a view that the CDI model was more useful than other models for dealing with situations outside the criminal justice arena (#GS6).

Another non-teaching interviewee reported running meetings of a school Board of Management and Parish Council as circles, with a talking piece and opening circle (including games); he found this helped people switch off from the outside and they were open to it with just one or two mild initial reactions against it; he also reported having a restorative conversation to resolve an issue with a new committee member (#SC4).

5.5 WHAT HELPED USAGE

Several interviewees referred to the **restorative questions** card and the associated framework for asking the questions. One said that it 'stopped them going off on tangents (#1). A number of interviewees kept the card prominently displayed and convenient (e.g. on the dashboard of their car (#GS1), on their desk (#GS3), with their phone (#GS4, GS9) in the yard notebook(#SC8), in their wallet (#SC9) and some had posters on their wall or white-board (#GS3, #FS7). One said that she kept both the questions card and feelings/needs sheets handy (#GS8). A Deputy Principal said that she knew the questions well but found it useful for the students to see the questions (#FS7). A teacher described herself as a 'mechanical user' of RP who liked to have the card nearby and blown up versions located on walls – she was not yet 'competent'. So, working in tandem with her colleague had given her confidence (#FS3). One Garda participant said that he used a different RP questions card and read from it so as not to risk missing out on any element; CDI on the other hand stress the need to learn the questions off by heart so as to keep the conversation natural and assist active listening (#GS6). One interviewee said that he used the restorative questions but adapted them 'somewhat', although sticking with the structure and their general thrust – he was not specific about the nature of the changes he made; he also mentioned getting students to spend time in a chill-out room before having restorative conversations with them (#GS14).

Several interviewees said that **having colleagues trained in RP** was or would be helpful (#SC7, #SC9 and others below). One teacher thought it would be helpful if everyone in her school was using RP but not many of her colleagues had been trained (#GS2), while another participant, not a teacher, made a similar point about her workplace (#GS5). One teacher commented that it would be helpful to be back in school, read up on RP and talk to colleagues about it, but Covid-19 made that impossible (#GS8). One respondent who worked in a school in a support role found it helpful that RP was used among her colleagues who were all trained in RP; she also participated in a refresher course run by the Getting Started trainer, who worked in the school (#GS13). Another said that he was co-located with the course trainer and could have conversations with her about RP issues (#GS14). A teacher said that the trainer had returned a couple of times to her school to see how they were getting on and she was also able to speak about RP with two colleagues, one who organised the training and one who inspired her to look for it (#GS8). One teacher said that support from her colleagues was strong (#GS9). Another teacher alluded to the fact all staff had been trained in RP by the school's CDI-trained trainers and were very positive (#FS2). A teacher who said that she did not feel competent yet said that working in tandem with her colleague had given her confidence; she also said that discussion of RP in the Staff Room had been helpful but had halted more recently (#FS3). A Family Support Worker said that her team provided an opportunity to discuss RP and she could also talk to the teachers in one of her schools where all the staff had been trained (#FS4).

A school Principal saw a **comprehensive approach** to implementing RP as more than helpful. She also identified having a willing and able staff as an enabling factor. RP had been built into their code of behaviour and anti-bullying strategy (#GS15). Three participants in a group interview referred to the whole-school approach and full commitment to RP by the school were positives, along with an active Core Team (#FS6). Similar comments were made by teachers in another school (#FS2, #FS7, #FS8). Another teacher thought it was very helpful that the school had an established restorative ethos (#SC9). A teacher said that **management support** ensured that a lot of progress had been made: Year Heads had really embraced RP and students were getting used to it (#FS5). A number of other interviewees referred to support from the school Principal as a positive factor (#SC6, #SC7, #SC8) although the absence of support did not prevent progress – one interviewee referred to a colleague in another school who was using RP to a 'fantastic extent' and achieving measurable results, despite the Principal being 'opposed' to RP (#SC11). Having circles as part

of the timetable was highlighted as an advantage by one teacher but she felt that other teachers had autonomy to introduce it as part of the Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) curriculum. (#SC2).

One respondent who worked in a school in a support role found it helpful to participate in a **refresher course** run by the Getting Started trainer, who worked in the school (#GS 13). One Principal issued occasional reminders about RP and a refresher session was held after Christmas; they had also had a community of practice in the week prior to the interview which was attended by nine teachers (#GS15).

According to another teacher, **seeing 'all the little successes'** was helping to overcome initial reluctance and suspicion on the part of colleagues; the students generally were buying into RP although some were not enthused by it (#FS3). A Deputy Principal observed that unexpected successes and 'real gem moments' had been noticed by staff and were helping to open things up (#SC6).

A guidance counsellor commented that her professional background had prepared her for RP – she was using RP approaches anyway and the RP training reinforced her practice and 'put a structure' on it (#FS5). A number of teachers reported drawing on the course materials, notably circle starters (#SC 3, #SC 8). Another teacher said that relationships with the students were key and were facilitated by recognising positive achievement inside and outside the school (#GS10). Previous exposure to RP was reported as having helped in one case (#GS11). Several interviewees commented on the value of training with other professionals (#GS1) or with people from a similar background e.g. fellow-teachers (#GS3, #GS8). Another interviewee noted that a benefit of the training for him as a Board of Management member was getting to know the teachers on the course (#SC4).

5.6 WHAT HINDERED USAGE

Some interviewees drew attention to absent factors whose presence had been identified as helpful. The **absence of management support** is an example. One teacher expressed frustration that, while all staff were facilitated to be trained within their hours, nothing had been implemented 'management-wise'; the Principal seemed unsure how to proceed and RP did not appear to be a priority for him (#FS2). The **absence of trained colleagues** is another example. Being the only teacher trained in RP was a disadvantage according to one teacher (#SC 2) while other respondents implied as much (#SC 7, #SC 10, #SC 12); one said explicitly that she would like colleagues to take the training so that she is not the only one called upon to do RP (#SC7). The **absence of success stories** was also noted. A Deputy Principal said that some teachers had had negative experiences when they tried problem-solving circles but in her opinion they had not shut down discussion when they should have when inappropriate things were getting revealed; in another case a circle was held by design without one pupil, but things were said back to the pupil by others afterwards (#SC6).

Many interviewees commented on the **time taken to run RP events**. One teacher who had co-facilitated three meetings pointed out two related factors that hindered greater use of meetings: they are time consuming and have to be factored into the schedule; she commented that she might have a 40-minute slot to investigate, prepare and facilitate where she has a class off but there is little flexibility and continuity can be broken (#FS3). Another said that she would not be able to use RP for problem solving as there would be a difficulty with making time available and with supervision of those not involved (#SC3). One teacher said that finding time to do RP was not a problem in her current school but would have been in her previous school (#SC10). A primary teacher reckoned that the main reason for few restorative meetings taking place in her school was the time required – everyone was completely committed in their time schedule and you couldn't get another teacher to step in for you while you facilitated a meeting (#SC13). A Deputy Principal found RP meetings extremely time consuming – it could be a full half day – although she acknowledged that traditional behaviour processes also took time (#SC6). Two teachers referred to general 'busy-ness' as a hindrance (#FS7, #FS8).

A number of interviewees referred to **resistance from colleagues**. One interviewee commented that some people were just not receptive to RP, 'knew' what happened and jumped to blame rather than look for a solution; you needed everyone on board, including management, for consistency (#GS4). A teacher in a Tomar-supported school commented that some colleagues were a 'bit jaded' at the training and resisted it (#FS5). A primary teacher noted a common

complaint and reason for resistance that older kids were asked the restorative questions for incidents in the yard or elsewhere but there were no 'social consequences' (#SC13). One primary teacher commented that there were some kids who were used to RP and would say what they thought you wanted to hear and what would get them off; her view was that you still need consequences for repeated actions; she added that a 'Yard Book' is kept and reviewed by the Deputy Principal who would 'call repeat offenders' (#SC3). According to another teacher, a key concern of teachers was about consequences of serious or repeat misbehaviour; some teachers were unsure and nervous about RP taking control away from them, ending 'sanctions' such as giving lines and standing up (#SC6).

Interviewees also referred to a number of miscellaneous factors that hindered usage. Two teachers in one school referred to the disruption caused by a **Whole School Evaluation** early in the first term where they were heavily criticised and a follow-up evaluation soon after (#FS7, #FS8). A Deputy Principal referred to a high **turnover** of key staff who had trained in RP (#SC6). A primary teacher alluded to poorer emotional intelligence of kids with **special needs** as a hindrance (#SC9). Using RP with **interpreters** was challenging and subtleties of restorative language were often missed (#GS4). One newly appointed teacher thought that maybe she overlooked RP because she had no **chance to embed it** in the class straightaway (#GS9). On the other hand, the view of one interviewee was that 'you're your own hindrance' and by implication that perceived hindrances could be overcome (#SC4).

5.7 INTEREST IN FURTHER DEVELOPMENT

There was strong backing among interviewees for continuing support through communities of practice and other opportunities to share experiences with colleagues. Many also expressed a need for and interest in additional training, either refresher training, the Facilitation Skills training or unspecified additional development. Most expressed interest in more than one option.

As regards **Communities of Practice** (CoP), one Getting Started interviewee said that there was no such follow-up other than a couple of chats about RP (#GS5). A school Principal acknowledged that they did not have any CoP or equivalent but said that she would think about that and also about having RP as a topic for their 'Teach Meets' where someone speaks for 12 minutes on a topic (#GS11). One interviewee anticipated that a type of CoP might be organised by her organisation's RP co-ordinator (#GS12). One teacher said that her school did not have any formal CoP or other forum for RP but she had attended a CoP in CDI and would occasionally discuss aspects informally with colleagues (#FS2). Another teacher said that the Core Team in her school was its own support group and they worked well together (#FS3). A Deputy Principal said that the school planned an in-house CoP and she herself was interested in attending external CoPs for trainers; she commented that some teachers were not modelling the restorative questions and language and needed a booster; (#FS7). A teacher in the same school also said that she would be interested in attending CoPs, adding that she and colleagues had had discussions among themselves, including the de-briefing after the first delivery of training (#FS8). Another teacher expressed interest in keeping in touch in an external CoP – she was the only teacher trained in RP in the school (#SC7). Another primary teacher thought a Professional Learning Group would be a great idea; she had learned from watching colleagues also but said she needed practice (#SC9).

Another teacher said that she had not attended any further RP development work but the Core Group in the school had engaged with her and others about how the Code of Behaviour might be revised; the whole school was transitioning to RP and most teachers had done RP training, so there was lots of talk about RP and consultation in groups; she would be interested in further training if offered by the school (#SC3). One respondent was training to be a trainer but the course had been disrupted by Covid-19; she said that there was no formal mechanism in place in her school to share experiences, although it had been part of the whole-school plan to have an RP session in each staff meeting with check-ins/outs and develop this into reviews of RP (#SC11).

Refresher training was mentioned frequently. Several said that they would welcome such training, without elaborating on their reasons (GS1, #GS2, #GS12, #GS14, #FS9, #SC5, #SC9). One interviewee recommended a one-hour refresher course for teachers which might look at circles and have role plays, especially in more challenging situations (#FS1). Another interviewee felt that refresher training would be preferable to proceeding to facilitation skills (#GS12). One teacher who was a qualified RP trainer said that she would welcome a refresher course on meetings and circles with more time for role plays/teasing out issues, with more complex, difficult cases (#FS3). Another teacher called for

refresher training by the in-house team in the autumn (#FS8). One Summer Course interviewee said that she 'would love to do' a refresher course as well as access on-line support (#SC2). A Principal said that the school had not had communities of practice so far and that he would like to organise further training, for the Core Team at least; he said that the training to date had been funded by the Tomar Trust but he would commit school funds to further training and would continue as a member of the Core Team (#FS10). A primary teacher recommended a refresher course, bringing people in for talks, using zoom to hook up with other RP people and more training for colleagues (#SC7).

Three Getting Started participants said that they would like to do the **Facilitation Skills training** (#GS2, #GS4, #GS7) while four mentioned interest in additional development without specifying its nature (#GS3, #GS4, #GS8, #GS14). One said that she would not be interested in doing the Facilitation Skills training as she would not have the confidence needed to be a facilitator (#GS 13). Another teacher said that she had **no plans** to develop her RP skills further (she had already trained as a trainer), adding that she would not like to be responsible with the other core members for all facilitation (#FS3). One teacher had not done any further development work but had no express desire to do so (#FS5). One interviewee stated that she would be interested in another **summer course** or other follow-up training of some kind (#SC1) while a primary teacher had planned to repeat the summer course in 2020 (#SC9). Two primary teachers expressed interest in an **e-learning** course (#SC9), one adding that she had no RP support or development opportunities in her school (#SC10). One newly appointed teacher said that she found RP 'really, really helpful' and had recommended it to everyone; she would welcome an on-line CoP (which she thought would be really useful around making up lessons for building relationships and managing conflict) (#SC2). One interviewee mentioned an on-line platform for sharing for educators developed by the University of Limerick that might be useful for CDI to link in with (#SC5).

Some interviewees were engaged in follow-up development themselves. One interviewee had investigated YouTube videos since the training; he was also keen to read more for himself and developing 'RP being' in a natural way (#SC4). A primary teacher said that, inspired by the training, she had inquired about related courses in Maynooth University (#SC7).

Two interviewees thought **mentoring** was desirable. A Deputy Principal thought that a visit or two by a mentor would be very valuable (#FS7). A colleague of hers also thought mentoring of the team would help (#FS8). A number of interviewees also referred to mentoring as something that helped usage, as reported in Section 5.6.

5.8 WHOLE-SCHOOL APPROACH

Implementation of whole-school approaches to RP emerged as an important theme among teachers and was repeatedly said to have helped usage. Several interviewees elaborated on implementation plans, progress and methodologies.

In one school, teachers had done on-line study and a variety of courses and there was sufficient interest to justify introducing RP across the school. In anticipation of resistance from some staff, the Deputy Principal did a 1.5 hour presentation to all staff. The school introduced a number of initiatives – such as Meet and Greet, Check-ins and weekly circles for positive relationship-building and endorsement purposes – that they felt this could be achieved with minimal training. They also revamped the Code of Behaviour. This was followed by a session with staff four months later where they invited questions (signed or anonymous) in advance. Covid-19 then put a stop to the initiative (#SC6).

In one primary school that aspired to being restorative, all staff had got some RP training but even after 2-3 years there was still resistance from many teachers. They were planning to look for a volunteer from each stream that the core group would support as regards restorative meetings. The option of a specialist RP facilitator was rejected, it was not seen as feasible and it is preferred that all teachers engage in facilitation. They hoped that the planned initiative would demonstrate benefits and generate more teacher buy-in (#SC13).

In another primary school that had embraced RP and included a reference to it in the disciplinary code, a teacher reported that fellow teachers were still a bit uncertain about RP and it was generally recognised that four hours training was not enough. The Deputy Principal had done an on-line course and two teachers had done a weekend course. The

school was planning an RP buddy system for the kids which it was hoped would help get kids on board (#SC14).

A school Principal said that she aspired to making her school a restorative one and had a three-year plan to achieve this. They would have a fair number of suspensions RP notwithstanding. They changed their anti-bullying policy to incorporate a restorative approach and when incidents occur, generally involving patterns of behaviour rather than specific targeted actions, they run circles and explain to parents what will happen and report back to them afterwards (#GS11).

A teacher said that when they resumed in the autumn she would like to see the implementation team up and running and greater structure around RP (#FS8). Another teacher recommended meeting the Principal when a whole school approach was being adopted so that training could be tweaked to specific school needs and priorities (#SC11).

A Principal had surveyed all staff and agreed a goal of becoming a restorative-practising school. She was committed to giving it the necessary time and money. She organised a presentation to the Board of Management and focus groups were held with students. All staff had been trained, including some to trainer status. Arrangements were being made to provide RP training to new staff due in the new school year (#GS15).

One Deputy Principal said that the school were reviewing the Code of Practice to see about introducing a restorative step before referral to the Board of Management and were considering use of circles in disciplinary hearings involving the board so that they would be less intimidating (#FS7).

A teacher said that she liked that RP was introduced in a low key way, built from the ground up and not imposed – that was positive (#FS3). One teacher expressed interest in receiving the CDI implementation guides when they were published (#FS2).

IMPACT



6.1 Overall impact

Respondents in both the Getting Started and Facilitation Skills/Summer Course surveys were very positive in their views about the impact of use of their RP skills. Nobody reported any negative impact and large majorities reported positive or very positive impacts at home and especially at work. Facilitation Skills/Summer Course survey respondents were more positive in their assessment in work and community settings than their counterparts in the Getting Started survey. See Table 26. Interviewees also provided many testimonies of positive personal and organisational impact of RP and gave insights into the nature of the impact; these interview results are presented further below.

Table 26: Impact of Use of RP Skills by Location

	Getting Started			Facilitation Skills/Summer Course		
	Home	Work	Community	Home	Work	Community
Very positive	14	39	0	20	55	15
Positive	64	50	39	60	40	35
Neutral	14	4	7	15	5	25
Negative	0	0	0	0	0	0
Very negative	0	0	0	0	0	0
Not applicable	7	7	54	5	0	25
Total %	100	100	100	100	100	100

Total n = 28 for GS and 20 for FS/SC

Percentages may not sum to 100 due to rounding

Six Getting Started and eight Facilitation Skills/Summer Course survey respondents gave comments on the impact of their use of RP skills. Five comments were very general, such as ‘I’m still learning’, ‘the impact will be even greater’ or ‘very useful’. Two referred to calmer, less stressful environments. The remaining comments were mainly reflective on RP as a concept, rather than focusing on any particular impact or outcome of RP. Comments include that ‘RP allows conversation from a different perspective and is fair’, that ‘it aids understanding’ and that ‘it is a clear and effective way to engage, without blame or shame, allowing everyone to give their viewpoint’.

6.1.1 Impact on Relationships and Experience of Conflict

Survey respondents were also asked about the impact of RP training on relationships and experience of conflict by asking about the extent to which they agreed with six statements. The questions were phrased in terms of attribution of changes to RP training. Their answers to the first three questions, on changes in relationships, are presented in Table 27. Again, respondents in both surveys were very positive in their views about the impact of use of their RP skills. All except one respondent agreed that relationships had improved in all three settings (excluding ‘not applicable’ cases).

Table 27: Impact of RP Training on Relationships

To what extent would you agree with the statement →	'My relationships at home are now better as a result of RP training'	'My relationships at work are now better as a result of RP training'	'My relationships in the community are now better as a result of RP training'	'My relationships at home are now better as a result of RP training'	'My relationships at work are now better as a result of RP training'	'My relationships in the community are now better as a result of RP training'
Extent of agreement ↓						
Strongly agree	0	18	0	10	45	0
Agree	68	54	36	45	35	45
Neutral	18	21	11	45	20	20
Disagree	4	0	4	0	0	0
Strongly disagree	0	0	0	0	0	0
Not applicable	11	7	50	11	0	35
Total %	100	100	100	100	100	100

Total n = 28 for GS, 20 for FS/SC

The two surveys produced broadly similar results, with greater numbers of Facilitation Skills/Summer Course respondents expressing strong agreement but also adopting neutral positions than their Getting Started counterparts. The differences were greatest in respect of the work setting. For the Getting Started cohort, just over two-thirds (68%) agreed that relationships at home had improved as a result of the training. The results as regards relationships at work were slightly better while results for relationships in the community are similar if the large number of 'not applicable' cases is excluded. For the Facilitation Skills/Summer Course cohort, over half (55%) agreed that relationships at home had improved while 80 percent and 45 percent agreed that relationships at work and in the community had improved.

Respondents' answers to the second three questions, on changes in experience of conflict, are presented in Table 28. Once again, respondents in both surveys were very positive in their views about the impact of their RP skills. All except one respondent in the Facilitation Skills/Summer Course survey said that they experienced fewer disputes in all three settings as a result of their RP training (excluding 'not applicable' cases).

Table 28: Impact of RP Training on Experience of Conflict

To what extent would you agree with the statement →	'I experience fewer disputes at home as a result of RP training'	'I experience fewer disputes at work as a result of RP training'	'I experience fewer disputes in the community as a result of RP training'	'I experience fewer disputes at home as a result of RP training'	'I experience fewer disputes at work as a result of RP training'	'I experience fewer disputes in the community as a result of RP training'
Extent of agreement ↓						
Strongly agree	4	21	4	15	15	0
Agree	46	36	18	40	60	40
Neutral	36	32	21	40	20	30
Disagree	0	0	0	5	5	0
Strongly disagree	0	0	0	0	0	0
Not applicable	14	11	57	0	0	30
Total %	100	100	100	100	100	100

Total n = 28

Compared with their Getting Started counterparts, greater numbers of Facilitation Skills/Summer Course respondents expressed strong agreement for the home and community settings but not for the work setting. However the position as regards work is more than offset by the numbers reporting lesser improvement: three quarters (75%) of Facilitation Skills/Summer Course respondents agreed or strongly agreed that they experienced fewer disputes at work compared with 57 percent of Getting Started respondents.

6.1.2 Frequency of Conflict

Survey respondents were asked about frequency of conflict in different settings with a view to comparing the position at the time of survey with the time of training. A comparison was made in two ways: first, comparing the results for all survey respondents and all trainees and second, comparing results for individuals whose results could be matched through their personal identifier.

According to the Getting Started survey (n=28), conflict was relatively infrequent at home, somewhat more frequent at work and least frequent in the community. The responses are summarised in Table 29. This Table also shows participants’ responses at the time of the training (n= 467). A comparison shows that frequency of conflict at home and at work was lower at the time of the survey than at the end of training while frequency of conflict in the community was broadly similar. If survey respondents are representative of all training participants, and this cannot be confirmed, then frequency of conflict diminished since the training. This could conceivably be due to learned RP skills contributing to prevention and defusing of conflict.

Table 29: Frequency of Experience of Conflict by Location – Getting Started Course

Getting Started	Home		Work		Community	
	Survey	Training	Survey	Training	Survey	Training
Daily	11	11	11	29	0	2
Weekly	14	23	25	30	7	5
Monthly	18	17	11	15	4	7
Less than monthly	43	36	43	21	36	49
Not applicable	14	13	11	5	54	37
Total %	100	100	100	100	100	100

Survey: total n = 28, Training: total n= 467

Excludes ‘no response’ cases

Percentages may not sum to 100 due to rounding

The Facilitation Skills/Summer Course survey (n=20) showed a similar picture as regards setting, with current experience of conflict infrequent at home, more frequent at work and least frequent in the community. Compared with the Getting Started survey, experience of conflict was less frequent at home but more frequent at work. The responses are summarised in Table 30, which also shows participants’ responses at the time of the training (n=157). Frequency of conflict at home and at work was substantially higher at the end of training than at the time of the survey while frequency of conflict in the community was similar. As with the Getting Started group, this suggests that experience of conflict diminished since the training, conceivably attributable to the training. However the same caveats apply about uncertainty over the representativeness of the survey sample.

The above comparisons between survey and training responses compared the responses of 28 Getting Started survey respondents and 20 Facilitation Skills/Summer Course respondents with those of significantly larger numbers of training participants, 467 and 157 respectively. It was also possible to compare individual survey results for some survey respondents with their own responses at the time of training.

Table 30: Frequency of Experience of Conflict by Location - Facilitation Skills/Summer Course

Facilitation Skills/ Summer Course	Home		Work		Community	
	Survey	Training	Survey	Training	Survey	Training
Daily	0	9	10	28	0	2
Weekly	10	22	35	32	5	2
Monthly	25	24	30	16	10	8
Less than monthly	65	34	25	21	45	50
Not applicable	0	10	0	4	40	38
Total %	100	100	100	100	100	100

Survey: total n = 20, Training: total n = 157

Excludes 'no response' cases

Percentages may not sum to 100 due to rounding

This could be achieved by matching personal identity numbers provided in both the survey and the training. Unfortunately, only 14 matches could be made for the 28 Getting Started survey and 13 for the 20 Facilitation Skills/Summer Course respondents because some respondents did not supply their identity number in the survey or their identity numbers which could not be found in the training database. These low numbers of matched respondents, 3.0 percent and 8.3 percent of all those eligible, further question the representativeness of the survey responses. Furthermore, recorded changes may be due to a number of factors that are unrelated to the impact of RP training, including change in respondent circumstances since the training (e.g. change of job), change in environment (e.g. decreased conflict due to departure of particular colleagues) or subjectivity of valuations and impact of temporary factors (e.g. mood at the time of survey completion).

For the 27 respondents whose survey and training ratings could be matched, nine experienced fewer conflicts at home, eight saw no change, and four reported an increase in frequency (with six recording 'not applicable'). Changes in ratings were minor (i.e. from one category to the next), with the exception of one Facilitation Skills/Summer Course respondent who reported an improvement of more than two rating points (from 'weekly' to 'less than monthly') and one Getting Started respondent who reported a deterioration of three rating points (from 'less than monthly' to 'daily'). The frequency of conflict at work had decreased for eleven respondents and stayed the same for another seven and five reported an increase in frequency. Changes in ratings were again minor, with the exception of two Getting Started respondents who moved from 'monthly' to 'daily' occurrence and four Facilitation Skills/Summer Course respondents, three of whom reported improvements of more than one rating point (e.g. 'daily' to 'less than monthly') and one that reported a deterioration of two rating points (from 'less than monthly' to 'weekly'). The number of cases in the community was too small to comment on. A summary of changes is presented in Table 31.

Table 31: Summary of Changes in Frequency of Conflict - Matched Results (n)

Both surveys	Positive	No change	Negative	Not applicable	Total
At home	9	8	4	6	27
At work	11	7	5	4	27
In the community	2	5	0	20	27

6.1.3 Effectiveness in Managing Conflict

According to the Getting Started survey, all respondents considered themselves effective in managing conflict at home (excluding ‘not applicable’ cases) and 36 percent thought that they were very or extremely effective. The corresponding figures for managing conflict at work were 89 percent and 43 percent. Perceived personal effectiveness in managing conflict in the community was broadly similar if the large percentage who felt that it was not applicable to their situation are excluded.

A comparison with responses at the time of the training again shows improvement in perceived levels of effectiveness in managing conflict at home and at work, with sizeable reductions for both settings in the numbers who said that they were only slightly or not at all effective. Management of conflict in the community also showed improvement but was less pronounced. Interpretation as regards representativeness of the survey respondents and attribution of improvements to the training are subject to the same caveats as before. See Table 32.

Table 32: Effectiveness in Managing Conflict - Getting Started Course

Getting Started	Home		Work		Community	
	Survey	Training	Survey	Training	Survey	Training
Extremely effective	11	6	4	3	0	5
Very effective	25	22	39	19	18	12
Effective	57	44	46	54	32	29
Only slightly effective	0	20	7	19	4	12
Not at all effective	0	1	0	1	0	2
Not applicable	7	8	4	5	46	41
Total %	100	100	100	100	100	100

Survey: total n = 28, Training: total n = 467

Excludes ‘no response’ cases

Percentages may not sum to 100 due to rounding

According to the Facilitation Skills/Summer Course survey, all respondents considered themselves effective in managing conflict at home and 30 percent thought that they were very or extremely effective. The corresponding figures for managing conflict at work were 95 percent and 35 percent. Perceived personal effectiveness in managing conflict in the community was lower but a large percentage felt that it was not applicable to their situation. See Table 33. A comparison with responses at the time of the training again shows improvement in perceived levels of effectiveness, more pronounced for conflict at work than conflict at home, but with sizeable reductions in the numbers who said that they were only slightly or not at all effective. Management of conflict in the community also showed improvement. Interpretation as regards representativeness of the survey respondents and attribution of improvements to the training are subject to the same caveats as before.

Of the 27 matched respondents, eleven said that they were more effective in managing conflict at home, another ten were unchanged and four felt that they were less effective. Ratings for effectiveness at work followed a similar pattern but with no negative changes. Only ten respondents gave self-ratings for the community setting, mostly unchanged over the period since the training. Two respondents reported being substantially improved in that they moved from a self-rating of ‘only slightly effective’ to ‘very effective’ at home.

Table 33: Effectiveness in Managing Conflict - Facilitation Skills/Summer Course

Facilitation Skills/ Summer Course	Home		Work		Community	
	Survey	Training	Survey	Training	Survey	Training
Extremely effective	10	1	5	2	0	2
Very effective	20	19	30	16	25	7
Effective	70	50	60	56	30	32
Only slightly effective	0	22	5	25	10	15
Not at all effective	0	4	0	1	0	5
Not applicable	0	5	0	1	35	40
Total %	100	100	100	100	100	100

Survey: total n = 20, Training: total n = 157

Excludes 'no response' cases

Percentages may not sum to 100 due to rounding

Another respondent felt that they had moved from 'only slightly effective' to 'extremely effective' at work. It is possible that survey respondents who gave negative responses would have responded differently if asked explicitly if they thought they had improved or disimproved since the training. This applies to all ratings of effectiveness, not just managing conflict. See Table 34.

Table 34: Summary of Changes in Effectiveness in Managing Conflict - Matched Results (n)

Both surveys	Positive	No change	Negative	Not applicable	Total
At home	11	10	4	2	27
At work	13	12	0	2	27
In the community	2	7	1	17	27

6.1.4 Effectiveness in Identifying Solutions to Conflict

High percentages of Getting Started survey respondents felt that they were effective in identifying solutions to conflict in the home and at work, with 93 percent saying that they were effective, very effective or extremely effective in the two settings. Forty percent felt that they were effective in the community, but the picture is distorted by a very large percentage of 'not applicable' cases. See Table 35. These levels show a notable improvement compared with the time of training, with greater percentages in particular saying they were 'very effective' at home and at work. The picture in the community setting is less clear because of differences in the number of 'not applicable' cases, but follows a broadly similar pattern of improvement when such cases are omitted. There were corresponding sizeable drops in the percentages who said that they were 'only slightly effective' or 'not at all effective' across all three settings.

Table 35: Effectiveness in Identifying Solutions to Conflict - Getting Started Course

Getting Started	Home		Work		Community	
	Survey	Training	Survey	Training	Survey	Training
Extremely effective	7	6	7	3	4	5
Very effective	36	23	30	22	7	12
Effective	50	48	56	51	29	33
Only slightly effective	7	14	4	19	0	10
Not at all effective	0	1	0	1	0	2
Not applicable	0	8	4	4	61	39
Total %	100	100	100	100	100	100

Survey: total n = 28, Training: total n = 467

Excludes 'no response' cases

Percentages may not sum to 100 due to rounding

High percentages of Facilitation Skills/Summer Course survey respondents also felt that they were effective in identifying solutions to conflict in the home and at work, with 90 percent and 85 percent saying that they were effective, very effective or extremely effective in the respective settings. A smaller majority (60%) felt that they were effective in the community, but with a large percentage of 'not applicable' cases. See Table 36. These levels show an improvement compared with the time of training, with greater percentages saying they were 'very effective' across all three settings and greater percentages in respect of conflict at home and in the community.

There were corresponding drops in the percentages who said that they were 'only slightly effective' across all three settings.

Table 36: Effectiveness in Identifying Solutions to Conflict - Facilitation Skills/Summer Course

Facilitation Skills/ Summer Course	Home		Work		Community	
	Survey	Training	Survey	Training	Survey	Training
Extremely effective	5	5	5	4	0	4
Very effective	25	17	30	16	15	5
Effective	60	53	50	50	45	33
Only slightly effective	5	20	15	29	10	16
Not at all effective	0	2	0	0	0	2
Not applicable	5	4	0	1	30	41
Total %	100	100	100	100	100	100

Survey: total n = 20, Training: total n = 157

Excludes 'no response' cases

Percentages may not sum to 100 due to rounding

Of the 27 matched respondents, ten reported improvements in their effectiveness in identifying solutions to conflict at home, another ten no change and five a deterioration, two of the latter from 'very effective' to 'effective' and one from 'extremely effective' to 'very effective'. The position as regards effectiveness at work showed positive change in ten cases and no change in thirteen others, with two unchanged and two 'not applicable' cases. Scores for effectiveness in the community were positive in two cases and unchanged in six, with all others in the 'not applicable' category. See Table 37.

Table 37: Summary of Changes in Effectiveness in Identifying Solutions - Matched Results (n)

Getting Started	Positive	No change	Negative	Not applicable	Total
At home	5	5	3	1	14
At work	3	9	0	2	14
In the community	0	2	0	12	14

6.1.5 Effectiveness in Building and Maintaining Relationships

High percentages of Getting Started survey respondents felt that they were effective in building and maintaining relationships at home and at work, 100 percent for at home and 88 percent for at work, with 60 percent and 57 percent respectively indicating that they were very or extremely effective. Six out of ten survey respondents (61%) that they were effective in building and maintaining relationships in the community but only one in four felt that they were 'very effective' and none said that they were 'extremely effective'. No-one thought that they were not effective in building and maintaining relationships in any setting. See Table 38. There was little difference between the survey and training scores as regards the home and community settings. There was a modest improvement as regards the work setting, with a corresponding drop in the percentages saying that they were 'only slightly effective' or 'not at all effective'.

Table 38: Effectiveness in Building Relationships - Getting Started Course

Getting Started	Home		Work		Community	
	Survey	Training	Survey	Training	Survey	Training
Extremely effective	21	22	14	10	0	11
Very effective	39	37	43	37	25	27
Effective	39	29	43	39	36	34
Only slightly effective	0	5	0	10	0	7
Not at all effective	0	1	0	1	0	3
Not applicable	0	5	0	3	39	18
Total %	100	100	100	100	100	100

Survey: total n = 28, Training: total n = 467

Excludes 'no response' cases

Percentages may not sum to 100 due to rounding

High percentages of Facilitation Skills/Summer Course survey respondents also felt that they were effective in building and maintaining relationships at home and at work, 95 percent for each, with 55 percent indicating that they were very or extremely effective. Three-quarters (75%) of respondents said that they were effective in building and maintaining relationships in the community but only one in five felt that they were 'very effective' and none said that they were 'extremely effective'. No-one thought that they were not effective in building and maintaining relationships at home while a very small number thought that they were not effective at work or in the community. See Table 39. There was effectively no change compared with the responses at the time of training as regards the home and community settings and a modest improvement as regards the work setting, with slightly higher percentages saying that they were 'very effective' and a corresponding drop in the percentage saying that they were 'only slightly effective'.

Table 39: Effectiveness in Building Relationships - Facilitation Skills/Summer Course

Facilitation Skills/ Summer Course	Home		Work		Community	
	Survey	Training	Survey	Training	Survey	Training
Extremely effective	15	14	10	9	0	5
Very effective	40	40	45	35	20	27
Effective	40	38	40	46	55	40
Only slightly effective	0	4	5	9	10	10
Not at all effective	0	2	0	0	0	0
Not applicable	5	2	0	1	15	18
Total %	100	100	100	100	100	100

Survey: total n = 20, Training: total n = 157

Excludes ‘no response’ cases

Of the 27 matched respondents, nine reported improvements in their effectiveness in building and maintaining relationships at home (including one improving from ‘only slightly effective’ to ‘extremely effective’), there was no change in scores in eleven cases and five reported a deterioration (all staying relatively high, falling from ‘extremely effective’ to ‘very effective’). Effectiveness at work was said to have improved in twelve instances, stayed the same in eight and disimproved in six. Three respondents felt that they had improved substantially, moving up more than one category (from ‘only slightly effective’ to ‘very effective’ and from ‘effective’ to ‘extremely effective’). Effectiveness in the community showed improvement in four cases and no change in nine, the rest being ‘not applicable’. See Table 40.

Table 40: Summary of Changes in Effectiveness in Building Relationships - Matched Results (n)

Both surveys	Positive	No change	Negative	Not applicable	Total
At home	9	11	5	2	27
At work	12	8	6	1	27
In the community	4	9	1	13	27

Overall, of the 27 matched respondents, 12 showed improvements or no change across all nine measures of effectiveness (managing conflict, identifying solutions and building and maintaining relationships at home, at work and in the community) and nine showed improvements or no change in all but one category. Most changes were from one category to the next (e.g. from ‘only slightly effective’ to ‘effective’) seven respondents noted changes from one category to the second next (e.g. from ‘only slightly effective’ to ‘very effective’) in at least one category. This included one respondent whose scores improved by three rating points in three categories. One respondent marked themselves as less effective across four categories and unchanged in all others but the survey score remained at 3 (‘effective’) or 4 (‘very effective’) throughout.

6.2 NATURE OF IMPACT

6.2.1 Source of Information

The surveys reported on in Section 6.1 allowed an overview of the impact of the use of RP skills. The interviews now reported allow insights into the nature of the impacts and provide context and perspective. Interviewees were initially asked about impact of RP in relation to the three settings of home, work and community but in light of time constraints and early responses, the approach adopted was to invite interviewees to tell about the impact generally, without reference to the three settings. Interviewees distinguished between impact on themselves, impact on others and impact

on their organisations, although the distinctions were not always clear-cut, with many providing answers across these categories. Interviewees also provided information on impact when talking about their usage, reported on in Section 5.

6.2.2 Personal Impact

As regards personal impact, many said that they were impacted in terms of a changed mind-set, without always being specific about impact on others. Some spoke about significant personal impact. One non-teaching interviewee, for example, said that the training had changed his attitude to life; he believed that the training had improved his ability to manage conflict and build and maintain relationships, specifically mentioning learning not to react or take sides; as regards impact at home, he said that he found the training 'transformative' (#SC4). A teacher said that he was the biggest beneficiary himself, personally and professionally; he found the restorative language particularly beneficial and felt he was a better father to his young children as a result of the training; he described the training in superlative terms such as 'personally transformative', 'incredible' and 'inspirational' (#SC12). A primary teacher just said that she had benefited personally, without elaboration (#SC13).

Several interviewees referred to improvements in their ability to manage conflict. A young primary teacher said that the training had remedied a deficit in her ability to deal with conflict at home and with her pupils; with just one year's experience when she did the course, she had felt under-equipped to deal with conflict and the course equipped her 'excellently'; calmness and fairness were two key takeaways for her (#SC14). Another primary teacher said that the training made her reflect on the way she spoke and she realised that she had been fuelling conflict situations; she said that RP was now her default position and that RP had 'definitely improved' her capacity to manage conflict and let others find their own solutions and had helped with relationships (#GS3). One interviewee said that her training course had 'definitely helped' as regards managing conflict but had also helped as regards identifying solutions (#GS4). One respondent reported that RP had impacted positively on the way she worked with her three boys as well as with her siblings over parental care and in her role as co-ordinator for a sports team; the training had made her more aware and she had learned to take the drama out of conflict situations (#FS1).

Another newly appointed teacher found that the training had been helpful for managing conflict – calming things, listening and, not jumping in (#SC3). Others made similar points. One primary teacher articulated that RP had got her to consider other possible perspectives in situations and gave the opportunity to pause, to choose to be responsive rather than reactive, to be a leader in the class and bigger than the child (#SC9). For one teacher, the training made her value getting both sides of an incident and not jumping to conclusions (#SC10). One experienced second level teacher said that one effect was that he began to see both sides whereas he might have gone with one side in the past – the person who seemed to be obviously on the receiving end (#GS10). Several Getting Started participants said that they were impacted as regards taking time to ask questions before acting and avoiding blame and shame (#GS1, #GS3, #GS4, #GS7, #GS12). An interviewee in a support role in schools said that the training had helped her stop interrupting kids and others and that life was easier with the RP approach (#GS13). An SNA stated that the training had made a difference to her in the way she talked with her charges, getting her to stop and think and not jump to conclusions (#FS9). A Deputy Principal said that she found that she was calm and more in control as a result of the RP training and was also modelling behaviour for pupils; her view and her message to colleagues was that RP made their teaching more effective and improved their professionalism (#SC6).

One teacher said that while she was good at managing conflict, she was 'definitely better now'; she was also better at identifying solutions and appreciated the importance of relationships as a result of the training (#FS2). Several other interviewees also referred to impact on identifying solutions and building relationships. One teacher mentioned that identifying solutions was easier as a result of the course (#SC1). Another reported that RP helped focus things and helped communications to find solutions (#SC2). Two interviewees stated that the biggest change was in giving a chance to talk, listening and being solution focused (#GS4, #GS7). One teacher observed that the RP discipline was good in curbing her tendency to try to solve people's problems and showing the extent to which she spoke and jumped in before (#SC5). Another reported that the RP training reinforced her capacity to build and maintain relationships (#SC2).

A number of interviewees said that they were already restorative but the training had brought them on and had made use of RP more explicit and professional (#GS3, GS7). One experienced second level teacher said that the training reinforced and endorsed his approach and gave him more of an idea of what RP was about (#GS10). A Year Head found the training was an 'eye-opener' – she said that she thought she was restorative already but this reminded her about putting it into everyday use – it was easy to get sucked into 'he said/she said' scenarios; she described the restorative questions as 'clinical' and 'very useful' (#FS6). A Deputy Principal found that the training inspired her and reminded her of good practice – she was a supporter of SPHE when it was brought in but the associated circle work had slipped (#FS7).

Several interviewees spoke about the RP training giving them confidence. One recently qualified teacher felt that it had definitely helped her with her confidence and in building rapport with the students (#GS8). An interviewee in a support role in schools said that she felt more confident and commented that RP was now 'part of her vocabulary' (#FS4). Another teacher reported that RP gave her confidence in holding the circle in her class (#SC2). One non-teaching interviewee said he felt more confident personally as a result of the training and had sought the chair of a community group whereas previously (#SC4). A primary teacher thought RP definitely helped in the class and gave her confidence (#SC9).

One interviewee concluded that the overall impact on her was 'quite small' but thought that RP was relevant to the job; she declared that she was not an RP cynic, having seen it work with JLOs and in the local school (#GS12).

6.2.3 Impact on Others

As regards impact on others, many interviewees made comments of a general nature about the positive impact on others and effectiveness of RP. One said that RP was 'way more effective' in dealing with situations in school, adding that teachers could no longer rely on their position of authority alone (#GS2). Interviewee #SC10 said that it made certain children 'more aware about their own and others' side of things'. One post-primary teacher said that he felt that students got a better understanding through RP, and an apology, if it came, was more likely to be genuine (#FS11).

There were many accounts of positive outcomes in individual cases and of impact on colleagues involved in the cases. A post-primary teacher commented on the outcome of a confrontation between a colleague and a student; both felt that the meeting he facilitated had resolved everything and the student offered to apologise in front of the class (#SC12). The same teacher also reported use of a popcorn circle to address a bullying incident and that the victim, who had attended with a supporter, felt that it was very worthwhile and that 'she had got her dignity back' (#SC12). One teacher reported having a restorative conversation with a student from her tutor group who had been in trouble with a colleague; she found it 'very effective' and the girl had since been very pleasant with her and smiled (which was not previously a feature) and unprompted, wrote a letter of apology and had not given any hassle since; she said that the other teacher, not trained in RP, acknowledged the change in the girl, saying 'I don't know what you did but ...' (#GS2). A non-teaching interviewee said that she had a restorative conversation with her tutor which achieved a desired outcome without negative repercussions (#GS1).

One interviewee cited multiple examples of positive impact when she was a school attendance officer and as a student support worker; as attendance officer she used to ask 'why are you late?' and students tended to 'get stroppy' but by asking restorative questions beginning with 'what happened?' students reacted more positively, came into her more easily and sometimes revealed issues that could be passed on to the guidance team; as support worker, she said that by using restorative questions she got great results in terms of atmosphere and response; she mentioned one girl who was not handing up exam papers and after their conversation turned in three completed papers (#GS13). One primary teacher remarked that she had worked individually with girls who were in cycles of misbehaviour, including one girl who made a remarkable change when she opened up about anxieties and her mother was involved (restoratively) (#SC7).

Several interviewees referred in particular to improved relationships. One non-teaching interviewee spoke about a colleague that she supervised who was defensive and had grievances but the relationship became very good after adopting a restorative approach (#GS4). Another non-teaching interviewee said that she found RP helpful in working

with a well-established team who resisted her (#GS5). A primary teacher reported on circle work with pupils from two classes that were not her own – her colleagues remarked on the positive changes where some relationships in the classes had got very toxic for a while; she said that another teacher expressed regret at not taking up the option (#SC7). A second-level teacher commented that RP had indeed made an impact and mentioned as an example that her 5th year students had many challenges at the beginning of the year but she had more rapport with them now, partly because of RP which she really found useful (#FS5). A primary teacher mentioned one particularly difficult child who had bonded well with her as a result of RP (#SC8) while others spoke more generally about changed relationships with previously difficult pupils (#GS2, #GS3).

RP's impact on calming things down was noted by several interviewees. A Deputy Principal had facilitated restorative meetings frequently and said that the 1st years took really well to it; she found that the meetings calmed things down and the participants found their own solutions (#FS7). One interviewee in a non-teaching role was emphatic that RP had made a difference at home with a calmer atmosphere and her children becoming more empathetic and ready to say sorry (#GS4). A similar interviewee said that she found RP 'really positive' in dealing with after-school children where she described the scene as like the 'aftermath of a Conor McGregor fight' – she used RP to make them aware, and got them to hear each other and consider what it might be like for the other person, e.g. a child not feeling well (#GS5). A Garda JLO said that he saw the benefit from the RP approach and that it worked across the board, calming situations; RP definitely had a big impact in his opinion (#GS6). One primary teacher said that the impact was very positive: there had been a lot of little issues and emotional regulation was not great, but now things were easier for everyone and she was able to concentrate on teaching and on the bigger issues (#SC1). Another teacher reported that RP had made a huge difference on her 6th class who were always troublesome but that had been turned around; communication had changed and they weren't resorting to hitting each other; her 5th class were good but she reinforced this through positive feedback and they were modelling it for others (#SC2). One primary teacher remarked that some arguments that had begun in Junior Infants had stopped in Senior Infants as a result of using RP, showing its effectiveness even at very young ages (#SC7).

A number of interviewees spoke of delayed or hidden impact. A teacher who was a Year Head gave an account of a restorative conversation with a 5th year student to whom she admitted that she had been wrong; she was initially disappointed that he did not respond in kind but it proved to be transformative all the same: all animosity was gone and they actually had a good relationship now (#FS6). A Deputy Principal referred to one meeting that did not seem to work that well – she said that the two boys involved were not able to process the last restorative question – however she saw them playing together the next day so she thought that 'they must have figured something out' (#FS7). Another teacher reported a beneficial outcome despite apparent initial failure; she used RP skills with a 2nd year student who was challenging her; she met him twice and they seemed to come to an agreement but he found it hard to back down in the classroom; she then took an alternative approach (e.g. not challenging him about being late, emphasising positives) that seemed to work, informed by restorative ideas and perhaps helped by the ground work for the meeting (#FS8).

An interviewee working with children with education deficits highlighted the impact of RP on respect for others; she recounted using RP to persuade professionals to look again at one case where the mother was being judged poorly and then working restoratively with the mother with a good outcome; she was working restoratively with six cases and the mothers had all said that they had been made to feel bad about their children before (#GS7).

6.2.4 Impact on Organisations

As regards impact on organisations, several interviewees, all from education backgrounds, spoke about the noticeable impact of RP where it was a cornerstone of changing the way their school worked. One second-level teacher said that you would see a difference in his school as a result of RP use and that the school was very pro-RP, with active support from the Principal and three Deputies (#GS10).

One school Principal said that she has adopted a whole school approach that puts blame aside and things had 'changed dramatically' as a result. She was able to report to the Board of Management in February that there had been no suspensions in the previous period, the first time that this had ever happened. She clarified that there were

still consequences for misbehaviour but there was always an RP element. Their Code of Behaviour specifies a system built on positive and negative points; they emphasise the positive side and a student cannot now get a negative point without a restorative conversation first. RP is also built into their anti-bullying strategy. It all took considerable time and effort at the beginning but was paying dividends. She would not claim that RP was ingrained 100 percent but RP had 'absolutely' had an impact (#GS15).

Another Principal reported that the school had avoided suspensions in several cases (e.g. for smoking and shouting offences); they worked restoratively with them and would typically give 3-4 opportunities to improve before a suspension; he also commented that he saw more positive staff-student relationships and a willingness on the part of teachers to listen; he remarked that not all teachers were converts but he would be optimistic that when they saw results, they would be persuaded (#FS10). A Deputy Principal in another school also mentioned suspensions; she said that pupils liked RP because it was fair and they could give their side of the story but some kids just didn't get it and the school still had suspensions; she said that they tried to be creative around consequences for poor behaviour, linking the responses to the specific types of behaviour, but found it very difficult to find meaningful sanctions and she would welcome a chance to generate ideas around this with other schools (#SC6). One primary teacher reported that school detention level were down but noted some teacher disquiet that alternative sanctions were not in place (#SC13).

On overall impact, a Deputy Principal said that they were 'up for RP right out of the traps' and there was a buzz around the place and a 'warmth' that she would attribute, in part at least, to RP; things had become a lot calmer than before (#FS7). A colleague of the Deputy Principal said that she thought that RP shifted thinking away from discipline to communications and solutions rather than blaming; she was slow, at the same time, to say that the school had become more relaxed but thought that the students had begun to adjust and respond to RP, including communicating better with each other (#FS8). A primary teacher who had just transferred to a school where RP was well-embedded, said that she found the children more reflective compared with her previous school; they were able to articulate their feelings even with less language ability than their counterparts in the middle-class school she had been in (#SC9).

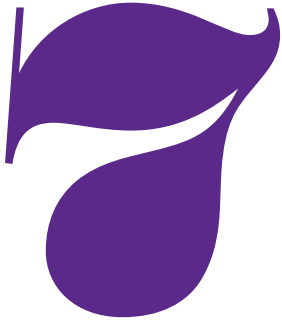
Other interviewees were positive about the impact of RP on their schools but were more cautious about the scale of the impact. One school Principal said that if you asked the kids, they would not know about RP, but she felt they were changing the culture a bit and there were pockets of teachers who were more reflective now (#GS11). A teacher in another school said that you couldn't really measure any difference on the corridor but he believed that RP seemed to be helping and was benefitting the school (#FS11). A colleague of his said that the students valued having their voice heard, which was new (#FS6). The Principal in their school said that in terms of overall impact, they would like to change the culture of the school but recognised that that took time (#FS12). One primary teacher in a school where most staff had been trained in RP declared that, overall, gains from the training had been small, subjective and hard to measure, but she was completely happy that RP was 'the way to go' (#SC11). A second level teacher said that the overall impact on the school was negligible as he was the only RP-trained teacher, did not have a remit about discipline and lacked the active support of the Principal (#SC12).

While some interviewees credited the training with bringing about personal or organisational shifts, including a teacher who was enthusiastic about the training and explicitly attributed changes to it (#SC7), others expressed reservations about attributing improvements solely to RP. One teacher referred to improvements generally but said that it would be hard to attribute them to RP alone, given that so much else was going on (e.g. peer mentoring) (#GS14). Another teacher said that behaviour had improved in her opinion but that RP was only one of a number of initiatives effecting change (#FS3). A school Principal who spoke very positively about the impact of RP also said that he would not attribute the change entirely to RP as a number of other initiatives had been taken (#FS10).

Other interviewees gave examples of impact on sub-sets of their organisation or spoke generally about impact. A primary teacher said that her Deputy Principal had acknowledged that she had worked wonders with a tough class, which she herself attributed in part at least to RP (#SC8). A non-teaching interviewee felt that board of management and committee meetings were stronger and better as a result of using RP; there was less contention and everyone had a voice, with nothing dismissed (#SC4). An SNA said that as regards general impact, people were more aware and careful about what they said and how they said it; she noted however that some older teachers did not want to take RP on and didn't (#FS9).

One newly-appointed primary teacher said that she could not comment on impact as she had no basis for making a comparison with a pre-RP situation but she liked that it helped children to take responsibility and understand; she observed that it was difficult to get through to pupils with extreme behaviour problems (#SC3).

**CONCLUSIONS AND
RECOMMENDATIONS**



7.1 INTRODUCTION

CDI is a leader in provision of RP training and promotion of RP in Ireland. It provided training to almost 4,000 people from 2013 to the end of 2019, including the 624 individuals the subject of this evaluation who received training in 2019. The evaluation shows very high satisfaction levels with all aspects of training across all three training courses examined – the overall training, knowledge presented, training methods, degree of interaction and trainer skills. Participants valued in particular the participative nature of the training, discussion and interaction within the group and with the trainers, the calibre of trainers and the variety of training approaches used. The evaluation also shows reasonably high levels of use of RP skills, although actual use appears to have been less than anticipated at the time of training: over 85 percent of survey respondents reported using restorative language at least weekly, over half had restorative conversations at least weekly and just over a third facilitated standard circles at least weekly; a quarter said that they had facilitated restorative meetings at least monthly. Positive impacts were reported as regards improved relationships, experience of conflict and perceived personal effectiveness in managing conflict, identifying solutions and building and maintaining relationships at home, at work and in the community. Many benefits at a personal and organisational level were also reported.

The evaluation examined training at three levels – Getting Started, Facilitation Skills and Summer Courses for teachers. Participants from the education sector dominated all three levels. They accounted for 79 percent of Getting Started participants, 88 percent of Facilitation Skills participants and 100 percent of Summer Course participants. The findings of the evaluation need to be interpreted with this in mind.

The information from interviews and surveys is subject to three other caveats. First, they were confined to participants who at the time of training agreed to be contacted later. Second, they involved a sub-group of these who volunteered to be interviewed and/or participated in the survey. Third, the response rates to the surveys were good for the sub-groups but low as a percentage of all training participants. This raises questions of representativeness of the samples and possible bias in responses.

This section of the report highlights key conclusions from the evaluation and makes recommendations.

7.2 CONCLUSIONS

7.2.1 Training structure

According to the interviews and surveys, training participants made little or no use of fishbowl problem solving circles and conferences which are large parts of the Facilitation Skills and Summer Courses. Some participants reported using standard circles to deal with problems but did not use the empty chair model in which they are instructed. Almost a full day's training is devoted to conferences but conferencing is reserved in most settings to a small cohort of people (e.g. school management), reflected in the recorded lower rates of likelihood of use. As regards the Getting Started training, several participants felt that the first part of the training was a little heavy and appreciated the practical elements more. Given common challenges in making staff available for training and participant suggestions for shorter training and more practice, it may be worth reviewing the training, notwithstanding the fact that the current training is well-established after finessing it over the years and a large number of people have been trained to deliver it.

7.2.2 Suggestions for Improvement

Suggested training improvements included more challenging scenarios in role plays, more time for practice and discussion, greater use of videos featuring positive practice or TED talks and use of more relevant and up-to-date school material. Some participants commented that the course could have been shorter and include a focus on whole school implementation and use of RP in the face of resistance from colleagues. The suggestions sometimes ran counter to each other, e.g. some calling for a shorter course, others longer, but overall they potentially provide a rich font of ideas for developing the training.

7.2.3 Training Messages

Participants reported a varied range of key messages taken from the training. Among those highlighted most frequently were the negative impact of blame and shame, the importance of taking responsibility for behaviour, the focus of RP on problem-solving, the importance of listening, the value of the restorative questions, the role of RP in building relationships, emotional intelligence, restorative language, the need for calmness, preparation, fairness and practice. Other messages focused on facilitator attributes and the need for inclusiveness. Many referred to the value of RP as a response to conflict and poor behaviour but missed the importance of using RP in positive situations. A host of other messages were highlighted, some of which raise questions about the participant's understanding or application of RP: one example is the adaptation of the restorative questions. The feedback from trainees also demonstrated different uses of terminology, with many referring to conversations or conferences when they meant meetings.

7.2.4 Usage at Work

Interviewees and survey respondents reported greatest use of RP in work settings. Interviewees invariably started to talk about the work setting before others and had to be asked specifically about use at home and in the community to elicit any response about those settings. Teachers spoke generally about using RP with students while managers in schools and other settings also spoke about using RP with clients and staff colleagues. Teachers rarely reported use of RP with colleagues and a number said explicitly that they would not. The value of having restorative conversations and/or meetings with colleagues about difficult situations needs to be emphasised and modelled and reasons for non-use explored further.

7.2.5 Usage at Home

Several interviewees said that they used restorative language and the restorative questions with children, even at relatively young ages. One queried use with under-7s as they lacked the ability to be empathic before then but others, in work situations such as crèches or classrooms, spoke about using RP effectively with young children and of their understanding, learning and adoption of basic elements. This is an important finding that suggests value in expanding use in such settings and may be especially relevant in working with stressed families in disadvantaged areas such as ABC areas. There were isolated examples of use, positive in all cases, with older children as well as spouses and partners.

7.2.6 Usage in the Community

No interview and survey participants reported significant, consistent use of RP in the community. In fact use in the community was rarely mentioned by interviewees, even when prompted, and a typical answer among survey respondents was that the community dimension was not applicable to their situation. This reflected to a degree the low level of conflict experienced in the community. At the same time, many reported improvements in their perceived personal effectiveness in managing conflict, identifying solutions and building and maintaining relationships in the community. It may be a lost opportunity that trainees see such little relevance of RP to their community, especially when the Balanced Model of RP underpinning CDI's training emphasises the community interest in the prevention and management of conflict. Under-usage and a perception of non-applicability may be due also to an understanding of RP as relevant to negative situations of conflict only, excluding its role in positive endorsement and building and maintaining relationships.

7.2.7 Implementation

Participants referred to the value of being part of an organisation with a restorative ethos and having the support of management and colleagues. Others spoke of the difficulty of being the sole restorative practitioner in an organisation, including feeling isolated and discouraged, or being identified as 'the restorative person' and called upon to facilitate all restorative meetings. A number said that they would have welcomed a stronger emphasis in the training on implementation, including how to manage resistance. A number of schools were adopting a whole school approach, the benefits of which are well established, but, in some cases, they faced difficulties which might have been avoided or managed with better implementation plans. Some expressed interest in receiving the CDI implementation guides when available.

Reported use of training appears to have been lower than anticipated, despite high rates of confidence about using skills and a view among interviewees that the training had prepared them adequately. Many called for post-training support and further training to help them increase their confidence and their use of RP skills. Supports identified included communities of practice/professional learning groups as well as more informal conversations with colleagues or trainers. Management and organisational support was also identified as valuable where it existed and hampering usage where it was lacking. Training mainly referred to refresher training or unspecified 'further training', as well as Facilitation Skills for those who had completed the introductory level training. A small number had witnessed facilitation skills in action by experienced colleagues or their trainers or co-facilitated events and found the experience very valuable. This suggests possible value in coaching and mentoring, however that response might be delivered.

7.2.8 Ensuring Quality Post-Training

The evaluation highlighted the need for adherence to restorative values and ensuring quality standards, although these aspects were not examined directly. Provision of refresher training, on-going support and embedding RP throughout an organisation were all identified as ways to ensure high quality application of RP skills post-training and fidelity to CDI's RP model. Regional and national networks can play an important role in ensuring on-going support to RP practitioners and organisations that aspire to being restorative. CDI is a major player on the RP scene nationally by dint of the numbers of people it trains, its experience, its network of trainers, its strong advocacy of RP, its commitment to quality standards and the resources that it has developed. It is appropriate that it continues to take a lead in developing RP in Ireland.

7.2.9 Schools Supported by the Tomar Trust

Funding of training by the Tomar Trust provided a unique opportunity to deliver RP training on a large scale in schools in disadvantaged areas in Munster. The training model was slightly different from the mainstream training. It was delivered on a whole school basis, generally in four sessions of two hours covering the Getting Started training; participation by all staff was obligatory, training groups were often large (and sometimes very large) and for some teachers training took place outside school hours (at the end of the day or at weekends). Trainers encountered resistance from some staff as a result. Teachers in the Tomar schools had lower rates of satisfaction with all aspects of quality of training than other groups, although the overall satisfaction rates were still high. On the other hand, Tomar teachers expressed greater confidence about using RP compared with others and there was little difference as regards likelihood of using RP skills. The initiative was successful in its key objectives of advancing RP to a large number of teachers in a short period and the school managements embraced it enthusiastically. That said, lessons can be learned about implementation.

7.2.10 Data Collection and Management

The CDI Excel RP Training database is a rich source of information about training participants at the time of training. It provides anonymous feedback on participant satisfaction which allows on-going monitoring of the quality and relevance of training. It also provides information on experience of conflict and self-assessment of effectiveness in dealing with conflict and building and maintaining relationships, which serves as a benchmark against which future progress can be measured. It is useful that the database records participant background, which showed the dominance of the education sector. The evaluation encountered difficulty, in a small number of cases, with participants sharing the same identifier and with errors such as duplicates and coding errors. The evaluation relied on surveys and interviews for information on current usage and impact but the number of survey responses was low and the survey instruments did not distinguish between very infrequent use of RP and no use at all, which proved limiting. A joint survey Facilitation Skills and Summer Course participants was carried out but it would have been useful to be able to separate the two groups without relying on the personal identifier to do so. The interviews provided essential qualitative information on use and impact but proved unsuitable for the intended collection of quantitative information on usage. It was not possible to organise focus groups due to Covid-19 restrictions.

7.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

7.3.1 Training Structure

CDI should review the three training models to reflect feedback from participants, focusing more on the introduction to RP and facilitation of standard circles and meetings, with less focus on theory and background and more on practice. Conferencing could be offered as a separate training option.

7.3.2 Suggestions for Improvement

CDI should consider systematically the suggested improvements from training participants, perhaps through focus groups of trainers. CDI should also seek to develop additional training materials, including videos and role plays/scenarios, building on CDI's existing stock of materials, that reflect the suggestions made by participants and that they can relate to easily.

7.3.3 Training Messages

CDI should review systematically the key messages that participants took from the training to ensure that they comply with intended messages and ensure that the training gives clear and consistent messages. The information should be shared with trainers, perhaps in communities of practice. CDI should also look at ways to ensure clear and consistent use of terminology.

7.3.4 Usage at Work

CDI should consider ways of emphasising the value of RP approaches with colleagues, modelling use with colleagues on training courses, exploring reasons for reticence and encouraging greater use. Efforts should be made to collect case studies of successful use within teams where tensions and conflict exist. CDI should also explore ways to expand use of RP in work settings other than schools.

7.3.5 Usage at Home

CDI should highlight positive experiences of using RP at home including with younger children and highlight the use of RP with young children in other settings such as crèches and schools. CDI should examine the relevance of findings under this heading to early childhood development and to families in disadvantaged areas. CDI should seek ways to promote RP in family situations and explore the potential use of RP in other services for children such as homeless hubs, direct provision centres and care settings.

7.3.6 Usage in the Community

CDI should review the use of RP in community settings and consider how to develop training and information that demonstrates the relevance of RP in the community. Consideration should also be given to how to strengthen the message of use of RP in positive situations such as relationship building and endorsement of positive behaviour. Case studies or other illustrations of successful application may contribute. CDI should actively develop and promote the use of RP in community settings, building on its experience in Tallaght and working in partnership with community-based organisations.

7.3.7 Implementation and Quality Assurance

CDI should retain and strengthen its training component on implementation challenges. CDI should also complete its implementation manuals and make them available to all concerned. It should explore ways to support organisations that are implementing a whole-of-organisation approach, including the provision of consultancy support through its quality and implementation experts and the organisation of workshops.

CDI should explore ways of ensuring provision of post-training support through communities of practice/professional learning groups, refresher training, mentoring and coaching, co-facilitation and observation of facilitation by experienced colleagues or trainers. Where a whole-of-organisation approach to RP has been adopted, the core team could be both a focus for external support and a source of internal support.

In the interests of ensuring active, high quality use of RP skills imparted, CDI should continue to advocate for and, where possible, provide refresher training and on-going support for trained staff and promote and assist robust implementation planning through its guidelines and work on quality standards. It should continue its support of regional and national networks through Restorative Practice Ireland and in other ways.

7.3.8 Schools Supported by the Tomar Trust

CDI should review its delivery of training in schools that are funded externally and the experiences of trainers and trainees should be harvested as part of the review. Where possible, the training should revert to CDI's tried and tested standard model. Group sizes should follow CDI's own guidelines, and two-hour sessions with long delays between sessions should be avoided. Training should be made attractive on its merits rather than mandatory and should be scheduled to facilitate attendance during the working day. CDI should examine the possibility of phased introduction of joint training across schools, prioritising enthusiastic staff. The normal pattern of training should apply, beginning with Getting Started training and following up with Facilitation Skills. Training delivery should be in accordance with an agreed implementation plan in each school that provides for post-training support. The training materials should be relevant to the schools.

7.3.9 Data Collection and Management

CDI should review its data collection and management system and (i) ensure inclusion of participants who might not have completed the pre-training and post-training surveys so as to provide a full picture of all training delivered, (ii) consider ways to ensure completion of the surveys by, for example, encouragement and reminding from trainers and building time into the training programme, (iii) update the database promptly and check content for errors regularly, (iv) amend the personal identifier to help reduce if not eliminate risk of identifiers common to two or more participants, (v) emphasise the need for participants to include the identifier when completing surveys, (vi) review the need for collecting information on frequency of conflict, (vii) take account of the pre-eminence of participants from the education sector when analysing data and (viii) monitor information regularly to identify emerging trends in feedback. CDI is already implementing some of these recommendations. Future surveys to establish use and impact of training should consider ways to increase response rates, having separate surveys for Facilitation Skills and Summer course cohorts and amending the survey instruments based on experience in this evaluation (for example, having separate categories for infrequent use and no use at all, and maximising comparability with information at the time of survey). Future interviewing should avoid seeking quantitative data and concentrate on qualitative information giving insights into the nature of use and impact.

Appendix 1: Evaluation Surveys

Getting Started With Restorative Practices Training Follow-up Evaluation

1. In the period since the RP training, how often have you used the RP skill of **restorative language**?

Daily Weekly Monthly Less than monthly Not applicable

2. In the period since the RP training, how often have you used the RP skill of **working WITH people**?

Daily Weekly Monthly Less than monthly Not applicable

3. In the period since the RP training, how often have you used the RP skill of **fair process**?

Daily Weekly Monthly Less than monthly Not applicable

4. In the period since the RP training, how often have you used the RP skill of **restorative conversation**?

Daily Weekly Monthly Less than monthly Not applicable

5. Please use the comment box below to share any comments on your use of these four RP skills

6. Over the last six months, **how often have you used any of the RP skills you learned at home**?

Daily Weekly Monthly Less than monthly Not applicable

7. Over the last six months, **how often have you used any of the RP skills you learned at work**?

Daily Weekly Monthly Less than monthly Not applicable

8. In the period since the RP training, **how often have you used any of the RP skills you learned in the community**?

Daily Weekly Monthly Less than monthly Not applicable

9. Please use the comment box below to share any comments on your use of these RP skills in the three different settings

10. How would you describe the **impact of your use of RP skills at home**?

Very negative Negative Neutral Positive Very positive Not applicable

11. How would you describe the **impact of your use of RP skills at work?**

- Very negative Negative Neutral Positive Very positive Not applicable

12. How would you describe the **impact of your use of RP skills in the community?**

- Very negative Negative Neutral Positive Very positive Not applicable

13. Please use the comment box below to share any comments on the impact of your use of these RP skills

14. To what extent would you agree with the statement **“My relationships at home are now better as a result of RP training”**

- Strongly disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly agree Not applicable

15. To what extent would you agree with the statement **“My relationships at work are now better as a result of RP training”**

- Strongly disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly agree Not applicable

16. To what extent would you agree with the statement **“My relationships in the community are now better as a result of RP training”**

- Strongly disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly agree Not applicable

17. To what extent would you agree with the statement **“I experience fewer disputes at home as a result of RP training”**

- Strongly disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly agree Not applicable

18. To what extent would you agree with the statement **“I experience fewer disputes at work as a result of RP training”**

- Strongly disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly agree Not applicable

19. To what extent would you agree with the statement **“I experience fewer disputes in the community as a result of RP training”**

- Strongly disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly agree Not applicable

20. Please use the comment box below to share any overall reflections on the value and impact of the Getting Started with RP training

21. How often do you **experience conflict at home?**

Daily Weekly Monthly Less than monthly Not applicable

22. How often do you **experience conflict at work?**

Daily Weekly Monthly Less than monthly Not applicable

23. How often do you **experience conflict in the community?**

Daily Weekly Monthly Less than monthly Not applicable

24. How would you rate your **effectiveness at managing conflict at home?**

Not effective at all Only slightly effective Effective
 Very effective Extremely effective Not applicable

25. How would you rate your **effectiveness at managing conflict at work?**

Not effective at all Only slightly effective Effective
 Very effective Extremely effective Not applicable

26. How would you rate your **effectiveness at managing conflict in the community?**

Not effective at all Only slightly effective Effective
 Very effective Extremely effective Not applicable

27. How would you rate your **effectiveness at identifying solutions to conflict at home?**

Not effective at all Only slightly effective Effective
 Very effective Extremely effective Not applicable

28. How would you rate your **effectiveness at identifying solutions to conflict at work?**

Not effective at all Only slightly effective Effective
 Very effective Extremely effective Not applicable

29. How would you rate your **effectiveness at identifying solutions to conflict in the community?**

Not effective at all Only slightly effective Effective
 Very effective Extremely effective Not applicable

30. How would you rate your **effectiveness at building and maintaining relationships at home?**

Not effective at all Only slightly effective Effective
 Very effective Extremely effective Not applicable

31. How would you rate your **effectiveness at building and maintaining relationships at work**?

- Not effective at all Only slightly effective Effective
 Very effective Extremely effective Not applicable

32. How would you rate your **effectiveness at building and maintaining relationships in the community**?

- Not effective at all Only slightly effective Effective
 Very effective Extremely effective Not applicable

33. Please insert your unique identifier in the textbox below so that your responses can be matched with the information you supplied at the time of your RP training. Your identifier is composed of your Birth Date (day and month in the form DDMM) followed by the first letter of your Mother's Maiden Surname, e.g. 0502M.

THANK YOU FOR TAKING PART IN THIS SURVEY!

Restorative Practices Facilitation Skills Training Follow-up Evaluation

1. Over the last six months, how often have you used the RP skill of **restorative language**?

Daily Weekly Monthly Less than monthly Not applicable

2. Over the last six months, how often have you used the RP skill of **restorative conversation**?

Daily Weekly Monthly Less than monthly Not applicable

3. Over the last six months, how often have you facilitated **standard circles** (go-around or popcorn)?

Daily Weekly Monthly Less than monthly Not applicable

4. Over the last six months, how often have you facilitated **fishbowl circles** (problem-solving)?

Daily Weekly Monthly Less than monthly Not applicable

5. Over the last six months, how often have you facilitated **restorative meetings**?

Daily Weekly Monthly Less than monthly Not applicable

6. Over the last six months, how often have you facilitated **restorative conferences**?

Daily Weekly Monthly Less than monthly Not applicable

7. Please use the comment box below to share any comments on your use of RP facilitation skills

8. Over the last six months, **how often have you used the RP facilitation skills you learned at home**?

Daily Weekly Monthly Less than monthly Not applicable

9. Over the last six months, **how often have you used the RP facilitation skills you learned at work**?

Daily Weekly Monthly Less than monthly Not applicable

10. Over the last six months, **how often have you used the RP facilitation skills you learned in the community**?

Daily Weekly Monthly Less than monthly Not applicable

11. Please use the comment box below to share any comments on your use of these RP skills in the three different settings

12. How would you describe the impact of your use of RP skills **at home**?

- Very negative Negative Neutral Positive Very positive Not applicable

13. How would you describe the impact of your use of RP skills **at work**?

- Very negative Negative Neutral Positive Very positive Not applicable

14. How would you describe the impact of your use of RP skills **in the community**?

- Very negative Negative Neutral Positive Very positive Not applicable

15. Please use the comment box below to share any comments on the impact of your use of these RP skills

16. To what extent would you agree with the statement **“My relationships at home are now better as a result of RP training”**

- Strongly disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly agree Not applicable

17. To what extent would you agree with the statement **“My relationships at work are now better as a result of RP training”**

- Strongly disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly agree Not applicable

18. To what extent would you agree with the statement **“My relationships in the community are now better as a result of RP training”**

- Strongly disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly agree Not applicable

19. To what extent would you agree with the statement **“I experience fewer disputes at home as a result of RP training”**

- Strongly disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly agree Not applicable

20. To what extent would you agree with the statement **“I experience fewer disputes at work as a result of RP training”**

- Strongly disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly agree Not applicable

21. To what extent would you agree with the statement **“I experience fewer disputes in the community as a result of RP training”**

- Strongly disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly agree Not applicable

22. Please use the comment box below to share any overall reflections on the value and impact of the RP Facilitation Skills training

23. How often do you **experience conflict at home?**

Daily Weekly Monthly Less than monthly Not applicable

24. How often do you **experience conflict at work?**

Daily Weekly Monthly Less than monthly Not applicable

25. How often do you **experience conflict in the community?**

Daily Weekly Monthly Less than monthly Not applicable

26. How would you rate your **effectiveness at managing conflict at home?**

Not effective at all Only slightly effective Effective
 Very effective Extremely effective Not applicable

27. How would you rate your **effectiveness at managing conflict at work?**

Not effective at all Only slightly effective Effective
 Very effective Extremely effective Not applicable

28. How would you rate your **effectiveness at managing conflict in the community?**

Not effective at all Only slightly effective Effective
 Very effective Extremely effective Not applicable

29. How would you rate your **effectiveness at identifying solutions to conflict at home?**

Not effective at all Only slightly effective Effective
 Very effective Extremely effective Not applicable

30. How would you rate your **effectiveness at identifying solutions to conflict at work?**

Not effective at all Only slightly effective Effective
 Very effective Extremely effective Not applicable

31. How would you rate your **effectiveness at identifying solutions to conflict in the community?**

Not effective at all Only slightly effective Effective
 Very effective Extremely effective Not applicable

32. How would you rate your **effectiveness at building and maintaining relationships at home?**

Not effective at all Only slightly effective Effective
 Very effective Extremely effective Not applicable

33. How would you rate your **effectiveness at building and maintaining relationships at work**?

- Not effective at all Only slightly effective Effective
 Very effective Extremely effective Not applicable

34. How would you rate your **effectiveness at building and maintaining relationships in the community**?

- Not effective at all Only slightly effective Effective
 Very effective Extremely effective Not applicable

35. Please insert your unique identifier in the textbox below so that your responses can be matched with the information you supplied at the time of your RP training. Your identifier is composed of your Birth Date (day and month in the form DDMM) followed by the first letter of your Mother's Maiden Surname, e.g. 0502M.

THANK YOU FOR TAKING PART IN THIS SURVEY!

Appendix 2: Interview Questions

GETTING STARTED WITH RP - INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Course Date: _____ Venue: _____

Participant ID (for evaluation tracking purposes only): _____

1. YOUR USE OF THE TRAINING

1.1 In the period since the training, how often would you say you used the RP skills you learned about in the training?

Restorative language	
Working WITH people	
Fair process	
Restorative conversation	

1.2 In the period since the training, how often have you used any of the RP skills you learned about in the following settings?

At home	
In the community	
At school, with students	
At work, with colleagues	

1.3 What helped or hindered you in your use of the RP skills? What did you find least or most useful?

1.4 In the period since the training, have you engaged in any follow-up/further training, community of practice, or similar developmental activity?

Prompt re nature, location, dates, impact, other; also any plans to engage in such activity in the future

1.5 Do you think that the training equipped/prepared you adequately for using restorative interventions? Would you suggest any changes that would have helped?

1.6 What would help you make greater use of RP in the future?

2.IMPACT OF THE TRAINING

2.1 How would you describe the impact of your use of the RP skills in the following settings? [Prompt re frequency of disputes, quality of relationships, changes to your own behaviour and outlook]

At home	
In the community	
At school, with students	
At work, with colleagues	

2.2 Overall reflections on the value and impact of the Getting Started with RP training

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3. DEALING WITH CONFLICT/BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS

4.1 How often do you experience conflict?

At home	
In the community	
At school, with students	
At work	

4.2 How would you rate yourself at managing conflict?

At home	
In the community	
At school, with students	
At work	

4.3 How would you rate yourself at identifying solutions to conflict?

At home	
In the community	
At school, with students	
At work	

4.4 How would you rate yourself at building and maintaining relationships?

At home	
In the community	

At school, with students

At work

Thank you for taking part

Date completed: _____

FACILITATION SKILLS – INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Course Date: _____ Venue: _____

Participant ID (for evaluation tracking purposes only): _____

1. YOUR USE OF THE TRAINING

1.1 In the period since the training, how often would you say you used the RP skills you learned about in the training?

Facilitating standard circles (go-around, popcorn)

Facilitating fishbowl circles (problem-solving)

Facilitating restorative meetings

Facilitating conferences

1.2 In the period since the last training, and thinking of both the Getting Started and Facilitation Skills training, how often have you used any of the RP skills you learned about in the following settings?

At home

In the community

At school, with students

At work, with colleagues

1.3 What helped or hindered you in your use of the RP skills? What did you find least or most useful?

Facilitating standard circles (go-around, popcorn)

Facilitating fishbowl circles (problem-solving)

Facilitating restorative meetings

Facilitating conferences

1.4 In the period since the training, have you engaged in any follow-up/further training, community of practice, or similar developmental activity?

Prompt re nature, location, dates, impact, other; also any plans to engage in such activity in the future

1.5 Do you think that the training equipped/prepared you adequately for using restorative interventions? Would you suggest any changes that would have helped?

1.6 What would help you make greater use of RP in the future?

2. IMPACT OF THE TRAINING

2.1 How would you describe the impact of your use of the RP skills in the following settings? [Prompt re frequency of disputes, quality of relationships, changes to their own behaviour and outlook]

At home	
In the community	
At school, with students	
At work, with colleagues	

2.2 Overall reflections on the value and impact of the RP training

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3. DEALING WITH CONFLICT/BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS

4.1 How often do you experience conflict?

At home	
In the community	
At school, with students	
At work	

4.2 How would you rate yourself at managing conflict?

At home	
In the community	
At school, with students	
At work	

4.3 How would you rate yourself at identifying solutions to conflict?

At home	
In the community	
At school, with students	
At work	

4.4 How would you rate yourself at building and maintaining relationships?

At home	
In the community	

At school, with students

At work

Thank you for taking part

Date completed: _____

