

TOOL n°10 – The Restorative Dialogue and Restorative Circle

Example for training :

Nour, a 49-year-old single father of four, comes home very tired after a long workday. During the weeks when the children are with their mother, he works double shifts to make ends meet. While he is eating quietly, his upstairs neighbor, Mika (36 years old), puts on some music and sings along loudly. He laughs for a moment. For the rest of the evening, the music continues to blare through the speakers, and when Nour wants to go to sleep, Mika, together with a friend, has started a small dance party. They sing, dance, and jump around. Nour has had enough of it. He goes upstairs, knocks, and rings the doorbell several times, but initially receives no response. He persists, and when Mika finally opens the door a little, Nour verbally explodes at Mika. Mika is startled and slams the door in his face. Nour angrily returns to his apartment, but while leaving, he bangs hard on the wall of Mika's apartment. By the time he reaches his apartment, Mika has turned off the music.

This is a situation that can happen pretty much anywhere. But if we don't find constructive ways to deal with it, people may live at odds with each other for a long time.

In this case, Nour managed to vent his frustrations with his social housing agent who lives in an apartment on the ground floor of the building. He is a trained restorative practitioner. Using the Restorative Questions, he knows exactly how to listen to Nour's story and what to do next.

After assessing how Nour experienced the whole situation, the housing agent meets up with Mika. He assures her he's there not to judge her, but first of all to listen to what happened from her perspective. Again, the Restorative Questions help him out here. Mika explains how she recently moved out of necessity to this small apartment. Due to her chronic muscle disease, she no longer had the strength to maintain her previous home. Since she doesn't know how quickly the disease will progress, she is determined to make something beautiful out of your life. Music helps her to escape from the reality of her illness.

She explained that she had a difficult day that Thursday. When she heard her favorite record in the evening, she turned up the volume and sang along at the top of her lungs. In her enthusiasm, she even called her best friend and invited her over to dance together. They had a great time, until suddenly they heard loud banging and shouting. Mika was startled. It sounded so intense that it made her a little scared. With the support of her friend behind her, she went to check and opened the door just a little.

Her neighbor immediately started shouting angrily at her, so she says. In a reflex she quickly slammed the door shut. She was shocked by the incident and turned off the music. Her friend stayed with her for a while until the tension eased.

The housing agent now had all the pieces of the puzzle. He had met both neighbors separately. Both were able to express how the situations had affected them. But both could also see what they themselves could have done differently. He decided to invite them for a Restorative Dialogue.