

Restorative Review for Health Professionals

Restorative Review is an individualised approach to supporting professionals, patients and carers when things have gone wrong in the course of providing medical care. When working with professionals, the immediate aim of **Restorative Review** is to help people act with grace and kindness to themselves and to others during professional troubles and difficulties. The long term aim is to make medicine safer by promoting candour, compassion, and constructive responses to performance concerns, patient complaints and medical harm.

How can Restorative Review promote insight and support compassionate action?

At its heart, **Restorative Review** is about acknowledging the impact of damaging events on oneself and others, and identifying appropriate ways of rebuilding trust and confidence. In some cases the result of **Restorative Review** will be truly accepting responsibility for harm that you have done to others. In other cases it will mean coming to terms with harm that others have done to you. In either case, fully acknowledging the moral meanings of past events helps professionals to identify and put into practice compassionate and considerate action.

During **Restorative Review** we reconsider the powerful moral stories and emotions that arise when professional activity in medicine is called into question. Morally loaded stories about professional experiences encapsulate treasured beliefs about how people ought to behave. They also carry strong and enduring emotions such as shame, regret, anger, sadness, guilt, forgiveness, trust, a sense of betrayal, and the desire for atonement. Such stories and feelings play a significant role in shaping how people respond to troubling events. They can underpin helpful moral behaviours such as listening, apologising, being accountable and demonstrating understanding when people are hostile to you. But they can also underlie negative behaviours such as destructive self-blame, denial, recrimination, perfectionism, and scapegoating. The aim of **Restorative Review** is to offer a psychologically safe environment in which to gain insight into how stories and feelings are shaping behaviour, and to plan and implement morally beneficial ways forward.

Why do we need Restorative Review in medicine?

When we ourselves, or those we love, need medical care we have no choice but to place our trust in strangers. For good or ill, health professionals are the recipients of this unbidden trust. The rewards when all goes well are immense. But when things go wrong the impact on everyone can be devastating. Individual doctors can struggle with the knowledge that they have done harm while meaning to do good, and may find it hard to demonstrate acceptance of responsibility and accountability. Professional colleagues or friends can find it difficult to give support while in the grip of their own moral emotions. Regulators are more concerned with judging and punishing than with the demands of repairing damaged relationships. This is when **Restorative Review** can help.

How does Restorative Review work?

Restorative Review has some affinity with coaching, but is unique in placing the moral dimension of experience at the centre of the work. It draws on research evidence and insights from fields including moral philosophy, mediation, bereavement counselling, and world faiths. In most cases, participants make an initial commitment to twelve 90 minute meetings. In these meetings they review moral assumptions and the associated emotions. They explore their understanding of their moral responsibilities, as well as those of others. Finally, they use their moral imagination to find practical, compassionate ways of repairing relationships with patients and the profession.