

Social Worker - Client Incident - Role Play

BACKGROUND: The incident happened as follows:

Jamie Wells lives in a rural area and travels 20 km by bus into town each week under a court order to meet for a two-hour session with his/her **Social Worker Danny Stevens**. They have worked together for five months, and Jamie has shown up regularly in this time. This has enabled the relationship to develop and strengthen.

Last week, while Danny was walking with Jamie to his bus stop at the end of their session, three youths Jamie knew were standing at the bus stop. It was obvious to Danny that Jamie did not like these youths. While usually polite and friendly in Danny's company, Jamie suddenly became tense as they approached the bus stop. Jamie became more aggressive, glaring at them and making rude gestures with his/her hands before starting an argument with them. Danny could tell there was negative history between them, and very soon verbal insults were being thrown around, some directed at himself too.

Danny managed to de-escalate the situation and the three youths eventually left the area. Jamie's bus arrived soon after, much to Danny's relief, he/she was very shaken and upset by the incident. Danny felt Jamie had placed him/her in a potentially dangerous situation, felt pained by the verbal abuse directed at him/her and that the trust they had built up together had been badly damaged. Danny was also worried about bumping into the youths from the bus stop again, which was a real possibility as the town was a fairly small and close-knit community.

In a one-to-one debriefing session with Danny's supervisor **Charlie Smith** (Senior Social Worker) the following day, Danny was clearly upset. Danny wants to continue the sessions with Jamie, but not before first addressing what happened. The supervisor has good relationship with the Head Teacher of Jamie's school and has arranged for a teacher there who is trained in RP to facilitate a restorative meeting between them. All have agreed to participate in the restorative process.

Participants (*Use your own gender for each role*):

Jamie Wells – **Client** (Wrongdoer)

Danny Stevens – **Social Worker** (Harmed Person)

Charlie Smith – Senior Social Worker (Supervisor/Affected Party)

Facilitated by a school teacher trained in RP

SHEET 1

Jamie Wells

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Jamie Wells – *Client* (Wrongdoer)

(Use your own gender for the role):

You agree to participate in the meeting despite feeling a little tense about it. You are not sure why you behaved the way they did, though guess this probably happened because of the bad history between you and them. You do remember feeling quite threatened when you saw the three youths at the bus stop.

During the meeting you realise the effect of your behaviour has had on your Social Worker – Danny.

You become visibly embarrassed and want to apologise.

You also want to continue your sessions with Danny and 'make things right' with him/her.

Please do not exaggerate your role and make it difficult for the facilitator to conduct the informal restorative meeting. Most real restorative meetings run fairly smoothly without extreme behaviours.

SHEET 2

Danny Stevens

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Danny Stevens - *Social Worker* (Harmed Person)

(Use your own gender for the role):

You eagerly awaited this meeting as you were shocked at Jamie's behaviour. Nothing like this ever happened before. Jamie has always shown great commitment and engagement in the weekly sessions and had a strong attachment to you as his/her social worker.

With the agreement of your supervisor Charlie, **you plan to continue working with Jamie** and believes in their potential.

You want to work with the Jamie on how to avoid a repeat of this kind of behaviour.

Please **do not** exaggerate your role and make it difficult for the facilitator to conduct the informal restorative meeting. Most real restorative meetings run fairly smoothly without extreme behaviours.

SHEET 3

Charlie Smith

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Charlie Smith – Senior Social Worker (Affected Person)

(Use your own gender for the role):

You attend the meeting willingly (having set it up), to give an overview of the repercussions of Jamie's behaviour on Jamie. You want to address how the incident adversely affected Jamie.

You wish to reiterate that such **sessions need to be safe for everyone** involved.

You would like to work towards **rebuilding the safety Jamie and Danny's relationship** by seeking assurances from Jamie that this behaviour will not be repeated.

Please **do not exaggerate your role and make it difficult for the facilitator to conduct the informal restorative meeting. Most real restorative meetings run fairly smoothly without extreme behaviours.**

FACILITATOR SHEET

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FACILITATOR:

You were asked to facilitate this informal restorative meeting. You have spoken briefly with the meeting participants and found the following:

- **Jamie** has no objections about coming to the meeting and seems remorseful and takes responsibility for his/her actions. Jamie is also keen to continue the sessions with his Social Worker Danny.
- **Danny** was shocked and upset by Jamie's behaviour and readily agrees to come to the meeting. Danny believes in Jamie and wants the sessions to continue, but only if they can both feel safe.
- **Charlie Smith** (*Danny's Supervisor*) is concerned that trust and safety in the worker/client relationship has been compromised by Jamie's behaviour and wants to set out a pathway for re-building both. They also want assurance from Jamie that such behaviour will not be repeated.

Jo THOMAS
(Student)

Harmed Person

Mr/Ms JONES
(Teacher)

Harmed Person

Chris EVANS
(Student)

Wrongdoer

FACILITATOR
(Colleague)

Jo THOMAS
(Student)

Harmed Person

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