

Using Comic Strip Conversations in Restorative Justice

Why use Comic Strip Conversations (CSCs) in Restorative Justice?

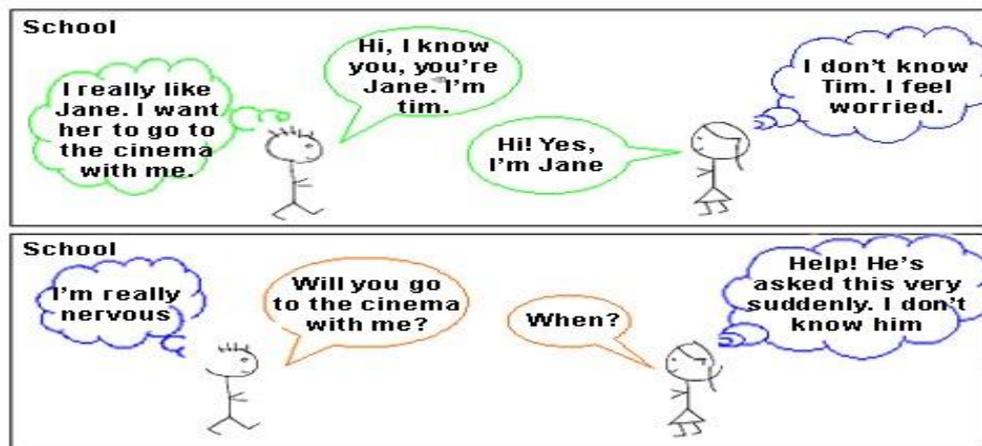
CSCs can support a young person to explore incidents where someone has been harmed. It provides a visual opportunity to explore what happened, what the young person was thinking and feeling at the time and helps develop the young person's ability to see the thoughts and feelings of the victim, and therefore the impact of their actions on others.

CSCs can also be used to explore more appropriate ways of managing situations in the future.

What is a CSC?

A CSC is a drawing based approach that provides a visual representation of an interaction or series of interactions between two or more people. By visually representing the different elements of an interaction or conversation the abstract aspects (the thoughts, feelings and intentions of people) are made more concrete and therefore easier for the young person to understand.

A CSC looks like a comic strip using stick drawings to represent people, speech bubbles to represent what is said, thought bubbles to represent what is thought and colours to represent feelings. For example:



Source: Secondary Language Builders, H.McLachlan & L. Elks)

What do I need to write a CSC?

Paper, pen/pencil and colour pencils. The YP can choose to use other materials such as marker pens or crayons in order to encourage ownership of the process.

How to write a CSC with a young person:

The young person does as much of the writing and drawing as possible (however if the young person does not want to write/draw the adult can do this, following direction from the young person).

The adult asks all or most of the questions to give structure to the task. The adult asks the following questions one at a time and then the young person draws/writes the response:

- 1) **Where did the event occur? Where were you first?** (YP writes location or draws location symbol in top corner and draws stick figure of themselves in the location) *the YP may have been at a different location that built up to the incident so it may be useful to start here.
- 2) **Who else was there?** (YP draws in the other people)
- 3) **What were you doing?** (YP draws relevant items and actions)
- 4) **What happened? What did the others do?** (YP draws relevant items and actions)

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- 5) **What did you say?** (YP draws speech bubble & writes what was said inside)
- 6) **What did the other person/people say?** (YP draws speech bubble & writes what was said inside)
- 7) **What were you thinking when you/the other person said or did that?** (YP draws thought bubble & writes what was thought inside)
- 8) **What do you think the other person was thinking?** (YP draws thought bubble & writes what was thought inside)
- 9) **How were you feeling?** (YP colours in the thought bubble with relevant colour to represent the emotion)
- 10) **How was the other person feeling?** (YP colours in the thought bubble with relevant colour to represent the emotion)
- 11) **What happened next?** (YP draws a new comic square to represent the next step of the incident)
- 12) **Go through Qs 4-9 and continue to go through this process until getting to the end of the event.** Any actions that happened after the incident such as going to the police station to be interviewed, a search of their home etc could still be included in the CSC in order to explore thoughts and feelings after the incident.

The YP can choose their own colour scheme to represent emotions or use this:

Emotions Colour Scheme:
• Green: good ideas, happy, friendly
• Red: bad ideas, angry, unfriendly
• Yellow: Frightened
• Blue: sad, uncomfortable, worry
• Black: Facts, truth
• Orange: Questions
• Brown: comfortable, cosy
• Purple: Proud
• Colour combination: Confusion

Key considerations:

- Spelling or neatness of presentation should not be a concern.
- Introduce and practice using the CSC for a neutral situation first.
- If the YP has social communication difficulties including ASD, practice drawing CSCs for several neutral situations over a series of sessions first. When the YP is familiar with the process of CSCs then use this to explore the identified restorative incident.
- Depending on the YP's ability it can be best to introduce only basic emotions first.
- If the YP expresses conflicting feelings, use a combination of appropriate colours, to indicate confusion.

How do I support the YP to identify others thoughts and feelings:

- If the YP is unsure what the other person might be thinking or feeling, the adult can share their perspective.
- If the YP gives an inaccurate response of what the other person might be thinking or feeling, the adult should model the accurate response.

Identifying new solutions:

- The YP can be encouraged to review the CSC and suggest new solutions to prevent the incident from occurring again. Another CSC can then be drawn to illustrate the solution.

For more information or support contact Speech and Language Therapy in the Youth Offending Team