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# Transformative Encounters in Conflict Processes

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Transformative Encounters  
in Conflict Processes

by

Garrett Evans

An undergraduate honors thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the

requirements for the degree of

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in

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### Abstract

Beyond resolutions and agreements, there is a deeper level of internal and relational transformation which some conflict processes seek to bring forth. The purpose of this paper is to examine three models of transformation, how it occurs, and how to facilitate it; and to seek common themes and patterns between these models. With these themes identified and illuminated by insights from psychology, philosophy, and interpersonal neurobiology, I offer a synthesized hypothesis of transformation and recommendations for facilitation. Finally, I address future directions for study, particularly in the intersection of trauma, interpersonal neurobiology, contemplative psychology, and conflict transformation.

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## Introduction

I feel deeply drawn towards processes and practices which I sense have the potential to genuinely touch and open the heart, dissolve artificial barriers between self and other, and move beyond the confines of internal contradiction and conflict and into greater integrity and authenticity. This is what drew me to the field of conflict resolution: I sensed that conflict, met skillfully, could serve as a kind of doorway for this transformation. Conflict, almost always, involves intense and conflicting emotions, a powerful sense of disconnection and separateness, and an internal sense of disorganization, fragmentation, or incoherence. It also, latently, holds the potential for deeply felt emotional resonance, meaning-making, and restoration. I can recall particularly poignant moments in group processes where I became acutely present and available to other participants, where my heart opened, and where I felt connected to, even at one with, the group. In the wake of these experiences, I felt filled-up somehow, restored, more deeply alive, open, free, and connected to something larger than myself. While the thrill and focus from the experience faded over time, I sense that these experiences have a lasting impact on my level of wellbeing, equanimity, and availability and that they are an essential part of a process of growth and opening that is unfolding within me.

The purpose of this paper is to lay a framework for understanding transformative experience in the context of structured and intentional intergroup and interpersonal conflict processes. Particularly, I am interested in how scholar-practitioners conceptualize and explain transformation, how they know if it is happening or has happened, and how they suggest supporting its unfolding. By analyzing, in depth, several models of transformation, I will derive common elements and then, informed by other theories, synthesize these into an integrated framework for transformation.

By developing a synthesized hypothesis of transformative encounters in conflict processes, I will have a better understanding of what occurs during transformative experience, the general process by which it occurs, and the driving forces behind its unfolding. This will inform my theory of change and have implications for the planning and facilitation of, and perhaps even for participation in, conflict processes. With an orientation and set of strategies informed by a more robust theory of transformation, I, and hopefully others, will be able to more effectively and consistently plan, facilitate, and participate in processes which result in deep and genuine transformation. This will benefit not only participants and facilitators, but also, as we move into our lives with a greater sense of integrity and authenticity, those around us.

My research and discussion centered on theories of transformation provided by Meredith Rossner (2013), Barbara Tint (2012), and William Keepin, Cynthia Brix, and Molly Dwyer (2007). Rossner's work focuses on restorative conferences, two to three hour meetings between a person who committed a crime, the victim of the crime, and family or support people for those involved. Her theory draws heavily from Collin's interaction ritual theory and focuses on the interactional dynamics and ritual ingredients and outcomes present in successful conferences. Barbara Tint presents the Transitions Framework in the context of intergroup/interethnic dialogues, consisting of between 12 and 20 participants and taking place over 11 4-hour weekly meetings. Her theory draws heavily from Kelman's (2000) idea of reconciliation as identity change and maps the stages of that process, noting common emotions and challenges present in each stage, along with strategies for facilitation. Keepin et al.'s model is derived from their work facilitating Gender Reconciliation, a process consisting of about 18-30 participants of equal number men and women and taking place in an immersive 3-5 day workshop. Their theory is

informed by David Bohm's ideas on dialogue as well as by various spiritual traditions and reflects this with an emphasis on the spiritual dimension of transformation.

I describe each of these processes in depth and create a logic model for each, noting in detail the inputs, activities, and outputs, as well as the effect during the program, the immediate and long term outcomes, and intended impact. Following this, I highlight emerging themes and commonalities. I then discuss key themes in more detail, drawing from Bohm's (1981; 1996) ideas of the implicate and explicate order and his conceptions of fragmentation and wholeness, Daniel Siegel (2003; 2010) ideas of attunement, integration, and mindsight, Kelman's (2004) idea of reconciliation as identity change, and Bowling and Hoffman's (2000) conception of the integrated mediator.

Drawing from each of these perspectives, I present a hypothesis of transformation which conceptualizes a phase of individual and group preparation, followed by beginning to explore issues and overcoming the challenge of avoidance and blame. As this initial challenge is overcome, there is a phase of deepening exploration of issues, immersing participants in the process. This presents a kind of emotional and cognitive paradox (Bohm, 1981;1996): participants experience increasing empathy for the other, while at the same time becoming increasingly in touch with their own intense feelings around the conflict. In this situation, thinking of or perceiving the conflict as us-vs-them no longer makes sense. As participants move into a space of not-knowing and become increasingly invested in the interaction (Rosser, 2013), they become present and available in a deep way, creating the opportunity for a deeper understanding to emerge. This occurs through the process of *attunement* (Siegel and Hartzell, 2003), where the internal state of one person resonates in the mind of another(s). As this occurs, there is an invigorating sense of joining, and participants may intuit an underlying whole of

which each member of the group is an essential part, effectively switching from an us-vs-them orientation, to a “we” orientation. Following this, the new “we” orientation is affirmed through various rituals often involving an upholding or honoring of the other group and a commitment to continue living from this new orientation.

It is important to note that in the orientation I present, transformation is not something we can make happen or control, but is a natural unfolding which we can support, participate in, and give ourselves to. This said, the model has implications for practice, as I identify challenges and tasks of each phase and transition point and discuss the modalities that each model uses at different points in the process. Additionally, it has implication for design, building processes that reflect in structure the phases the group will be going through. Finally, with attunement recognized as a key to success and transformation, we can draw from the research on attunement, particularly the role of mindsight, to suggest the implementation of practices that will increase the likelihood and depth of transformation.

## Methodology

My research was conducted through a review of literature, examining scholarship in the field, identifying what was relevant to my research question, and synthesizing my findings. After hearing about my topic, my advisor, Dr. Cunliffe, recommended *Just Emotions* and Barbara Tint introduced me to her book, *Diasporas in Dialogue*. Before starting this project, I had read *Divine Duality: the power of reconciliation between women and men* and participated in a Gender Reconciliation workshop. I choose these three books as my main sources as they each offered a unique model and understanding of transformative encounters. While my original intent was to conduct a literature review, after identifying these three models, Dr. Cunliffe recommended that I switch to a case study approach in which I identify common themes among the models.

For each model, I wrote a detailed summary, focusing on what transformation meant in that context, the key ideas and understandings of the stages of the process and how it happens, and recommendations how to support it unfolding. Following this, I conducted a logic model analysis of each model, noting in detail the inputs, activities, and outputs, as well as the effect during the program, the immediate and long term outcomes, and the intended impact. Reflecting on this analysis, I identified a number of common themes and patterns. Furthermore, Dr. Cunliffe introduced me to the idea of *linking constructs*, or underlying processes which link steps together in logic models (personal communication, 2016). We noted the similarity of the “turning point” and “empathetic identification” and she suggested that these corresponded to Siegel’s idea of attunement and that this was a shared linking construct between models. This was how I was introduced to Daniel Siegel (2003; 2010) and why I choose to include his work.

Additionally, I found important sources and authors through the bibliographies of the three main models I choose to include. Both Keepin et al. and Tint cite David Bohm, and Tint cites Kelman, Bowling, and Hoffman. Before beginning this project, I had read Bohm (1981; 1996) and appreciated his work and perspective; I thought his ideas on dialogue, fragmentation, and wholeness, in addition to being foundational to two of the models, provide an illuminating perspective on what is occurring in transformative encounters. I included Kelman (2004) because his work is foundational to Tint's and because his article on reconciliation as identity change provides another important and interesting perspective on transformation. I included Bowling and Hoffman (2003) because their article on the integrated mediator highlights the subtle influences of a mediator, and, from an entirely different perspective, aligns with the work of Siegel and Hartzell (2003). I discovered Wade (1998) through my own online search of articles and choose to include her concept analysis because I thought she provided a crisp and accessible introduction to transformative experience.

Having examined key common themes from these perspectives, I began my discussion. My personal experience certainly influenced the way in which I thought about, synthesized, and conveyed my hypothesized model. My synthesis method was to sit and write until I saw that my synthesis attempt failed to encompass my data. And to repeat this until a draft emerged that I felt encompassed the common themes in a coherent way. My first draft, however, while coherent to me, lacked readability. After some time, re-organization of data, and additional reading, I re-wrote two more times, until I had a discussion I felt was not only more encompassing and coherent, but also more accessible. Attempting to communicate, in an accessible way, the connections I began to see was, in fact, an important part of my own process of clarifying these ideas and coming to a deeper understanding.

Without a doubt, my personal experience with conflict processes informs the style and content of my writing. This personal experience comes largely from my participation in the Gender Reconciliation process; I have not personally participated in either of the other two models. This said, many ideas presented in each model conveyed experiences which resonate with my own, and so my own way of understanding and describing those experiences was informed by my research, and this, in turn, informed my writing of the discussion.

### Three Case Studies of Transformation

In this section, I will introduce transformative experience by reviewing a concept analysis of personal transformation. Following this, I will present the three main perspectives on transformation within conflict processes which I will analyze: Gender Reconciliation, Restorative Conferencing, and Group Dialogue. The Gender Reconciliation model involves between 12-30 self-identified men and women who meet all day for 3-5 days (Keepin, Brix, & Dwyer, 2007). Restorative Conferencing works with victims and offender of crimes, usually consisting of significant preparatory work and a two to three hour meeting. The conferences usually involve 6-10 participants: one or two facilitators, the victim(s) and their supporters, and the offender(s) and their supporters (Rossner, 2013). The Group Dialogue model involves several facilitators and 12-20 participants from different ethnic groups. They usually have 11 4-hour meetings over the course of 11 weeks (Tint, 2013). For each of these models, I will explore how they conceptualize and explain transformation, as well as the key ideas and understandings of the stages of the process and how it moves forward. I will also explore the structure of the process and how they support its unfolding, along with how they know if transformation is happening or has happened.

#### Concept Analysis: Gail Wade

In her concept analysis of personal transformation, Gail Wade defines personal transformation as, “a dynamic, uniquely individualized process of expanding consciousness whereby an individual becomes critically aware of old and new self-views and chooses to integrate these views into a new self-definition” (Wade, 1998, p. 713). In her conceptual map of personal transformation, she identifies antecedents, critical elements, and consequences of such

an experience. In this model, personal transformation is preceded by a disorienting dilemma which reveals a problematic intellectual and emotional meaning scheme that conflicts with one's self-view and produces a painful, threatening and challenging opportunity for reflection and expansion of consciousness. For transformation to occur, the individual must make the choice to confront the conflict or dilemma; whether this choice occurs gradually or dramatically, it marks a transition point in the process of transformation. In this understanding, to confront the conflict or dilemma is to face it without clinging to old ways of knowing – the individual who does this is receptive to new ways of viewing and understanding the self and experiences. When transformation occurs, a new level of consciousness develops which unites the mind and heart to form a new self-definition. As a result, the individual experiences a more inclusive, differentiated, permeable, and integrated meaning perspective. Transformation is often followed by feelings of excitement, satisfaction, and freedom, as well as sadness associated with loss of the old self. While the thrill and focus of transformation may fade over time, the individual continues to live by what has been revealed, experiencing themselves as having more freedom, more creativity, and an increased ability to handle stress (Wade, 1998).

Gender Reconciliation<sup>1</sup>: William Keepin, Cynthia Brix, and Molly Dwyer

The Gender Reconciliation process consists of a roughly equal number of women and men, totaling between 18-30 participants, along with at least 4 facilitators, and typically takes place in an immersive 3-5 day workshop (Keepin, Brix, & Dwyer, 2007). The intention of the work is to promote healing, harmony, and community where there has been long-standing conflict. While the specifics of the work vary, the basic flow of the process is as follows:

<sup>1</sup> Please note that I will be following the authors' lead and using the binary pronouns of men and women throughout the description of the GR process. Except in the rare occasion that there are enough non-binary identified individuals to form a third group, they ask that individuals make the difficult choice of selecting one of the two groups to work with; because the work has so much to do with undoing gender conditioning, this decision is often based on how they were raised as children. The authors readily concede this as a limitation of the GR model.

Women and men join together as equals, become deeply honest with each other about their experiences, and through this process heal past wounds, awaken together to new realizations, reach a place of reconciliation and forgiveness, and thereby are mutually transformed. The authors use the term “collective alchemy” in describing how the process of reconciliation unfolds. This refers to a spiritual process by which the inner darkness of the human psyche is confronted and transformed through the power of love, or what Martin Luther King Jr. called the “cure of grace” (Keepin, Brix, & Dwyer, 2007). In this process, that which is unconscious, denied, or pushed away is gradually illumined by the light of conscious awareness – a humbling and often painful process. Deep within this darkness, however, dwells an innate inner light, which awakened, transforms the individual through the power of love. In the Gender Reconciliation process, this is undertaken on the community level, beginning by gathering in a diverse group and creating a safe container for the work. Then, participants begin skillfully exploring arenas of experience which are usually avoided or unacknowledged, confronting the reality of longstanding and deeply painful patriarchal oppression. The group confronts these issues directly and compassionately, shining the light of personal and collective awareness on areas of human pain that have long been neglected or suppressed. Often, just when it appears that the group has entered the most hopeless or intractable territory, confronting a truth that seems beyond their capacity to hold, there is an infusion of healing presence or grace which opens participants to the experience of love and ushers in powerful group experiences of healing, reconciliation, and forgiveness. Each experience of heart-opening, transformation, and healing prepares the ground for yet another level of opening, expansion of the heart, and awakening to a deeper underlying unity.

In the authors' view, for humanity to move forward and evolve towards a civilization of love and harmony, it is essential that gender relations are reconciled on a much more profound level than has currently been achieved. Because everybody is affected by gender conditioning, the process of gender reconciliation is one of the most direct routes to awakening the collective heart of a community or group. In each of these workshops, women and men are jointly pioneering new forms of healing and mutual harmony and new models for women and men that could one day spread on a much larger societal scale. In this way, these groups, among others, are planting seeds of grace that will infuse society and eventually help transform it.

Underpinning the work of gender reconciliation is a key metaphysical assumption:

*“Just as a physical wound knows how to heal itself, so too the human psyche instinctively knows how to heal itself. This principle is foundational to gender healing work, and perhaps to all healing work, as it reflects the existence of a larger force or mystery that is responsible for healing. Our task in gender reconciliation work is to allow this mysterious healing process to unfold in its own organic, natural manner - and to be directed by it rather than attempting to direct it.”* (Keepin, Brix, & Dwyer, 2007, p. 34, emphasis in original).

Thus, it is possible to develop theories about and recognize certain aspects of the process, but ultimately, it is necessary to align with the deeper wisdom of the healing process. The task is to invite and support the process, creating conditions that support its unfolding. The process cannot be fully understood or controlled, nor is this necessary in order to participate in it. The fuel for this healing process is the heartfelt compassion and sincerity of collective intention that is brought to it. Beyond this foundational principle, five key understandings about the process and its unfolding have emerged through observation and experience:

1. *A spiritual foundation is essential.* This means a recognition of some form of larger compassionate presence or wisdom that is fundamental to all life and existence; in the work, this mystery is consciously invoked, embraced, and trusted in.
2. *A dynamic balance between masculine and feminine perspectives is essential, and differences must be honored and appreciated.* This means holding the tension of opposites, giving equal support to fundamentally different or opposing perspectives in a collective container so that the “alchemy of opposites” can work its creative ‘magic’.
3. *Transforming the cultural foundations of gender imbalance is best done in groups or communities.* This helps to expand beyond the personal dimension and see hidden forces operating in the collective that are beyond personal failings or understandings.
4. *The process requires the whole of one’s humanity.* If any essential aspect is omitted, the resulting transformation will be neither authentic nor lasting. The work must include and honor the full spectrum of emotions including anger, grief, fear, sorrow, shame, despair, and vulnerability. There are other times when contemplative silence, group meditation or prayer, spontaneous ritual, or other forms of nonverbal group work are essential to the process.
5. *Transforming gender relations is uncharted territory.* Methods and approaches continue to evolve, and there is no formula that applies to all situations. This said, bringing compassionate unflinching awareness to gender dynamics in group and communities is a powerful place to begin.

“How do we proceed in practice? The answers are simple enough, even if challenging to implement at times: speaking our truth, witnessing with compassion, staying present through the process, bearing with its agonies as well as its ecstasies; not flinching from the difficult realities; trusting in the emerging

wisdom of community; leaving nothing out, including anyone who participates in earnest; and, perhaps most of all, maintaining an unshakable faith in the human spirit.” (Keepin, Brix, & Dwyer, 2007, p. 48).

In support of these principles, participants are asked to uphold a set of ethical guidelines and agreements which help to ensure the integrity of the process and create a safe container in which to engage in the work. These include agreements of confidentiality, taking responsibility for one’s own experience and respecting the experience of others, being mindful about one’s communication style and allowing room for others to share, and to stay present for the duration of the process. Additionally, participants are asked to honor the power of silence and recognize that silence often reveals deeper levels of meaning and subtlety; finally, they are asked to allow ambiguity and uncertainty – holding the tension of opposites without necessarily trying to “fix” things.

Keepin et al. outline the steps they take in the process as making up three basic stages (see *Figure 1* for further detail): preparation and invocation; immersion and transformation; and consecration, integration, and closure. The first stage is primarily about preparing individuals and the group to engage in the process, building a container in which deep work can be done in the often unpredictable and sometimes volatile process of healing and reconciliation. This begins with a participatory invocation intended to unify the group in its collective intention for cooperation, mutual healing, and reconciliation. Additionally, ethical guidelines and agreements are established for the group, protecting the safety, integrity, and intimacy of the process. Finally, the group may engage in exercises for awakening sensitivity and heightening awareness of multi-level communication. The group may also engage in short periods of contemplative practice, further opening individuals and the group to subtler aspects of experience.

As the group transitions to the next stage, they begin to explore issues of injustice that relate to larger social and cultural arenas; this involves short multimedia presentations and processing in small breakout groups. Next, participants engage in a silent witnessing exercise, building an awareness of the shadow side of gender conditioning and its pervasive and destructive impact on individuals, making potent gender issues suddenly poignant and personal. The focus now begins to shift from the collective into the personal domain as participants share their own challenges and experiences. These stories stir emotions, awaken memories, inspire insights, and deepen the group bond. Often, volatile issues and concerns arise here, creating an energetic charge or tension in the group. The group then begins to experientially explore what has emerged up to this point, often utilizing forms of contemplative practice and experiential breathwork.

Now that key gender issues have been evoked within the group process and explored internally and collectively, the group breaks into separate, same-sex groups to explore them more deeply. Different techniques are utilized here, including truth-telling processes and conflict facilitation. Having met in separate groups for some time, the women and men then come back together to explore those issues which have released the most energy or charge in their respective groups. Often a truth forum is used at this point, where the groups convene in separate concentric circles, with the outer circle silently witnessing the dialogue of the inner circle.

Moving into consecration, integration, and closure, the groups separate once more and prepare rituals for honoring and celebrating the other group. Aside from basic guidelines of containing a blessing, an offering, and a commitment, the participants are asked to create the ritual themselves, allowing for spontaneity, creativity, and authenticity. These rituals are often profound and moving ceremonies where a palpable sense of the sacred is experienced or

glimpsed. Importantly, they also bring consecration and closure to one level of the work and help to establish the ground and trust for further unfolding. After the rituals, the focus shifts towards integration and closure, including a consolidation of key insights, practices for taking the learnings back into home lives and workplaces, and a closing council process.

To assess the efficacy and long-term impact of the work, the authors conducted a qualitative survey of professionals with six to ten years of experience participating in Gender Reconciliation workshops. These surveys inquired into participants' relationships with themselves, intimate partner(s), family, men/women, and LGBT and heterosexual relationships. The surveys also asked about memorable moments of the work, changes in societal perspective, the most valuable aspects of the work, suggestions for improvement, and thoughts on global implementation of the work. Keepin et al. summarize the findings as increased awareness and experiences of the spiritual dimensions of gender healing and reconciliation; increased compassion for others and sensitivity to their life's challenges; heightened awareness of gross and subtle inter and intra-gender dynamics; noticeable healing of long-standing gender wounds, often bringing increased freedom and energy; improved communication with intimate partners and family members of all sexes; deepened capacity for intimacy and honesty; direct experience of the healing power of community and of the power of cultural conditioning; renewed optimism regarding intimate relationships and inter-gender collaboration; increased capacity to address gender patterns; and increased awareness of the 'transcendent' nature of principles manifesting in all creation.

Figure 1 (continued on next page): Logic model of the GR process. Inputs refers to what is needed to set up the workshop; activities refers to the structure of the workshop and what participants are asked to do; outputs refers to what is produced by the workshop; the next three columns refer to outcomes that can be observed during, immediately after, and months/years after a successful workshop; impact refers to the intended impact of the workshop on individuals and the world.

Program	Inputs	Activities	Output	During	Immediate	Long-term	Impact
Gender reconciliation -William Keepin, Cynthia Brix, Molly Dwyer	-At least four trained facilitators -Suitable location -12 to 30 participants, ideally even male and female -Sensitivity and preparation around potential cultural issues	-Workshop of three to five full days, 12 to 30 participants <b>-Preparation/invocation:</b> -Invocation of collective intention for cooperation, mutual healing, and reconciliation -Establishment of ethical guidelines -Activities for heightening awareness of multi-level communication -Group Contemplative practice <b>-Immersion and transformation:</b> -Multimedia presentations on cultural dimensions of gender imbalance and small-group discussions -Silent witnessing exercise -Individuals share stories of their own challenges and experiences -Period of contemplative practice or experiential breathwork -Break into separate groups to more deeply explore key gender issues that have emerged, utilizing truth mandala or other processes -Reuniting for cross-gender truth forum <b>-Consecration, integration, and closure:</b>	-12 to 30 participants who have completed the process	-Preparing individuals and the group to engage in the process: building a container, unifying the group in collective intention, ethical guidelines, heightening sensitivity to communication, and contemplative practice. -Exploring arenas of experience which are usually avoided or unacknowledged and confronting the reality of longstanding and deeply painful patriarchal oppression, beginning with the collective domain through multimedia presentations and moving into the personal using silent witnessing and story-telling -Confronting key issues that emerge directly and compassionately through truth-telling processes, and contemplative practices, first in same-sex group, and then together -Beginning to recognize the truth of the “other” as their own experience -In the midst of the most difficult territory or apparent impasse, there is often an infusion of healing presence or grace, which opens participants to the experience of love and ushers in powerful group experiences of healing, reconciliation, and forgiveness. -Preparing and participating in rituals for the other, these rituals are often profound and moving ceremonies where a palpable sense of the sacred is experienced or glimpsed	-Deep sense of intimacy within the group -Feelings of tenderness, love, support, trust, and respect -Commitment to change -New understanding of the others’ experience -Positive feelings for self and other -Honoring and upholding of the other group -Continued monthly meetings	-Increased awareness and experiences of the spiritual dimensions of gender healing and reconciliation -Increased compassion for others and sensitivity to their life’s challenges -Heightened awareness of gross and subtle inter and intra-gender dynamics -Noticeable healing of long-standing gender wounds leading to increased freedom and energy -Improved communication with intimate partners and family members of all sexes -Deepened capacity for intimacy and honesty -Direct experience of the healing power of community and of the power of cultural conditioning -Renewed optimism regarding intimate relationships and inter-gender collaboration -Increased capacity to address gender patterns	-Awakening beyond a separate self, healing, transformation, and revelation of wholeness  -Healing of the human family, the end of patriarchy, and a new civilization of love

		<p>-Creation and enacting of rituals to honor and celebrate the other group (offering, commitment, and closure)                  -consolidation of key insights, tips for reintegration, closing council process</p>		<p>-Integration and closure: consolidation of key insights, practices for taking the learnings back into home lives/workplaces, and closing council process.</p>		<p>-Increased awareness of the 'transcendent' nature of principles manifesting in all creation.</p>	
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### Restorative Conferencing: Meredith Rossner

Restorative Conferencing works with victims and offender of crimes, usually consisting of significant preparatory work and a two to three hour meeting (Rossner, 2013). The conferences usually involve 6-10 participants: one or two facilitators, the victim(s) and their supporters, and the offender(s) and their supporters. In Rossner's view, the hope of restorative justice is that through coming together in the aftermath of a crime, an emotional transformation will occur which will help to heal victims and change offenders such that they seek out positive interactions in the future. Leading up to the conference, facilitators prepare the group by encouraging reflection on the harm done, building trust between participants, and preparing them to communicate skillfully. This leads to a buildup of emotional energy and creates optimal conditions for a successful interaction. The restorative conference creates a space where the intense emotions associated with the crime can be processed. In the conference, stigmatization and defiance develop into a conversational balance and rhythm, leading to a buildup of intensity/emotional entrainment, and ultimately to one or more turning points, where intense emotions bring the group together in a feeling of group unification. This results in a sense of group solidarity and of shared moral community, often accompanied by reintegration of the offender and symbolic representation. Group solidarity also results in positive emotional energy, or feelings of confidence and inspiration. This, in the future, translates to long-term emotional energy, and the continued seeking out of similar positive interactions.

Rossner's theory is heavily informed by Collins' idea of interaction rituals, which create symbols of group membership and fill individuals with emotional energy. Using an analysis of nonverbal cues and interactional dynamics, Rossner attempts to understand how emotions work in the complex and dynamic interactions that make up restorative justice conferences. This

approach is unique among other attempts to analyze conferences. Rather than focusing on the content of what is being said, Rossner instead focuses her attention on the process and on minor interactional and emotional dynamics. She defines success in restorative justice as ritual success, where the participants are emotionally transformed over the course of the interaction. This emotional transformation can take the form of empathy as well as group solidarity and cohesion, it may also impact behavior long after the conference has ended.

Discussing the literature on the role of ritual in transformation, Rossner introduces the concept of ‘collective effervescence’, becoming one with the group, as well as the potential of such an experience to transform not only emotions, but the sense of self. Drawing primarily from Collins’ interaction ritual model, she explains how the elements of group assembly, barriers to outside, mutual focus, and shared mood can begin to feed back upon each other. This leads the group into emotional entrainment, or rhythmic coordination and synchronization in their conversation, bodily movements, and emotions. When this occurs, participants can experience ‘collective effervescence’, or ecstatic energy and a feeling of group membership; at the height of such an experience, participants may feel swept away, transformed, and at one with the group. This leads to the outcomes of group solidarity, a sense of belonging to a shared moral community, and short term emotional energy, as well as the emergence of symbols of group membership and solidarity. Signs of solidarity present in a majority of successful conferences include touching, eye contact, crying, smiling, and acceptance of apology. Symbols of relationship can include an exchange of apology and forgiveness or a signed reparative agreement. While emotional energy is more difficult to measure, erect and relaxed posture can indicate the presence of positive emotional energy.

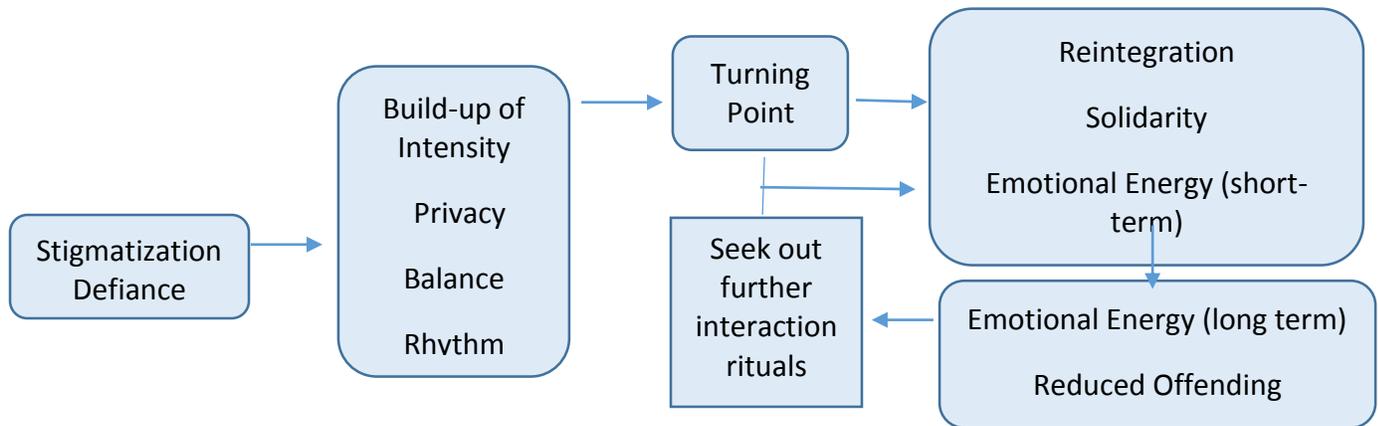


Figure 2: An outline of Rossner's Theory (2013, p. 146)

In Rossner's theory of restorative justice (see *figure 2*), a successful conference is contingent on a number of conditions and interactional ingredients. Firstly, in the time leading up to the conference, participants' emotions are built up as facilitators encourage them to reflect on the effect the crime has had on them and as they prepare to express their emotions in a respectful and non-dominating way. Additionally, facilitators must work to prepare a space with a successful interaction ritual in mind, including a private room and attention to seating arrangements. This helps to create a "sacred space" where participants can leave the everyday realm and be transported into the ritual world.

According to her findings, the two most important components of a successful ritual are the development of *balance* and *rhythm*. While the concept of balance includes the number of participants in the room and the relative speaking time, it also refers to more subtle aspects of real and perceived dominance. Rossner's analysis shows how rhythm can develop in a conference, with the interaction beginning with stutters, slurs, and embarrassing silences, but with participants developing mutual rhythmic feedback and offering verbal and nonverbal encouragement. As rhythm develops further, people begin to become emotionally entrained with each other, mutually investing in the creation of a successful interaction. Stigmatization of the

offender and defiance by the offender represent threats to rhythm, hindering the development of feedback or proper attention to turn-taking rules.

Furthermore, successful conferences contain one or more *turning points*, or emotional high points, where this rhythmic feedback solidifies. These high points are often marked by strong expressions of emotion and allow other participants to also let down their guard and express their emotions, resulting in an intimate moment shared between participants. Following a turning point, the ritual outcomes of a successful interaction begin to emerge, with participants engaging in high solidarity and reintegrative behavior. This includes synchronization of gestures and gazes, touching, hugging, laughing, and crying together as well as exchanges of emotion such as remorse, empathy, sympathy, and symbolic exchange of apology and forgiveness. Reintegration is a measure of emotions such as love, respect, and support between an offender and their supporters.

Another outcome of successful conferences is a short-term boost in emotional energy, potentially encouraging participants to seek more positive encounters. Emotional energy is expressed in smiling and relaxation in face and demeanor. In contrast, unsuccessful conferences result in emotional and physical withdrawal, characterized by slouching, leaning backwards, and an averted gaze. An additional hypothesized outcome is the development of collective symbols, which represent the positive emotions produced in a conference and work to store and prolong positive ritual outcomes, turning positive outcomes into long-term emotions. While examples of this can include signed agreements, the expression of apology and forgiveness, or a gift of some sort, these carry meaning to participants only to the degree to which they are spontaneous and genuine.

The final component of the model is the long-term effect of a successful ritual in increasing emotional energy and reducing offending. Data indicates that positive outcomes can be sustained years after the successful interaction and that long-term emotional energy can be translated into a reduction in offending. The final step of the theory suggests that the experience of a successful interaction and of positive emotional energy can create an incentive to continue seeking out and participating in solidarity-creating rituals.

Rossner explores what goes into creating the conditions under which successful restorative justice outcomes can be observed. Based on interviews with facilitators describing their best, worst, and typical cases, Rossner maps the dynamics of the interactions within the cases and offers a model of what constitutes a successful conference. Facilitators work hard to set up the physical and emotional elements of the conference - many hours of preparatory work may go into preparing individuals for a single two or three hour meeting. They work to build trust with each participant and to find suitable supporters for both victim and offender. Part of this trust-building is an establishment of ethical guidelines and the building of trust between participants and facilitators. Furthermore, the preparatory work is a kind of emotional labor, bringing forth the emotional affect of each participant so that they are able to fully participate in the conference. In addition to reflecting on and beginning to process their experience, participants also may begin to learn how to express their intense feelings and communicate in a skillful and respectful way. Part of the preparation for participants is also learning to regulate themselves and persist in the face of discomfort and intensity. If this preparatory work proceeds according to plan, the elements of a successful ritual may emerge: smoothing into a rhythm, a minimization of imbalance/disempowerment, a turning point, and displays of solidarity. Not surprisingly, in conferences where the participants did not find a rhythm (due to language

barriers or other issues), where one party dominated the other, or where either the victim or offender had no supporters, the conferences were much more likely to fail.

Based on this theory, Rossner goes on to provide recommendations for facilitators and researchers. The facilitator cannot control the participants or guarantee that the conference will be a success, however, they can do their best to ensure that ritual ingredients are present and so increase the likelihood of ritual success. In preparing for the conference, she suggests encouraging frank discussion of emotions and the effect of the crime. This helps to build up emotional energy prior to the meeting and set the stage for a powerful interaction ritual. She also emphasizes the importance of a private space, such as a clean room with chairs arranged in a circle and with thought given to seating arrangements, with more neutral or calm participants separating more charged or contentious ones. Additionally, face-to-face meetings are necessary for the emergence of successful rhythm and entrainment. In order to ensure a power balance, it is important for victims and offenders to have an equal number of supporters. Facilitators should be sensitive to developing power and status dynamics between participants. Facilitators should also encourage rhythmic entrainment, allowing for silences and encouraging eye contact, perhaps themselves making eye contact with one participant and then the other. Additionally, she suggests encouraging touching and the development of strong collective symbols, while being careful not to force physical contact. Rossner also notes that after a successful conference, it is helpful for participants to take part in a closing ritual in which they are able to transition back into an everyday state. Finally, if successful, she suggests holding follow-up conferences to recharge participants with emotional energy.

Figure 3: Logic model of the RC process.

Program	Inputs	Activity	Outputs	During	Immediate	Long term	Impact
Restorative Conferences -Meredith Rossner	-Private space -Considered seating arrangements -Case Development: reflection on impact, preparing to communicate, and building trust -Buildup of emotional intensity	-Facilitated two hour face-to-face conference - Involving the offender and their supporters and the victim and their supporters (6-10 people) -Dialogue	-6 to 10 people having completed the process -potential signed agreement	-Stigmatization and defiance turning into:  - <i>Balance</i> (speaking time, inclusion in conversation, real and perceived dominance, power, and status) - <i>Rhythm</i> (Turn taking, fewer stutters and filler words, verbal and nonverbal encouragement and feedback) - <i>Buildup of intensity</i> (emotional entrainment and investment between participants) - <i>Turning point(s)</i> (dramatic moment(s) when rhythm and entrainment coalesce and disruptions cease, bringing the group together in a feeling of ritual group intensity)	-Realize self as belonging to shared moral community - <i>Reintegration</i> (show of love, respect, and support between an offender and their supporters) - <i>Solidarity</i> (touching, eye contact, crying, smiling, and acceptance of apology) - <i>Emotional Energy (short-term)</i> (erect and relaxed posture, flow of speech) - <i>Symbolic Representation</i> (collective symbols of the positive emotions produced in the conference, such as a signed agreement of exchange of apology and forgiveness) -Transition period out of ritual space	- <i>Rise in emotional energy (long term)</i> (confidence, initiative towards social goals, pride about participation, sense of morality, increased trust) -Seeking out of positive interactions -Not reoffending	-Emotional transformation: -Healing for victims -Turning point in offenders lives, resulting in long term emotional energy and not offending in the future

Group Dialogue: Diana Bianco, Barbara Tint, and Roland Clarke

*Diasporas in Dialogue* presents the Transitions Framework as a way of understanding the internal transitions experienced by participants in reconciliation processes (Bianco, Tint, & Clarke, 2012). It is presented in the context of intergroup/interethnic dialogues, consisting of between 12 and 20 participants and taking place over 11 4-hour weekly meetings. In clarifying the concept of transition, the authors begin by differentiating transition from the concept of change. Change is an external event which occurs relatively quickly while transition is the internal response to change, which necessitates a process of psychological adjustment and an emotional process of coming to terms with that change. The Transitions Framework was developed to help people understand and communicate about the internal process and challenging emotions involved in transition. The Framework consists of three stages: *Endings*, which can produce relief, sadness, anger, or remorse; the *Neutral Zone*, which can be accompanied by fear and confusion, along with potential space for creativity; and *New Beginnings*, which can bring a mix of confidence and anxiety/excitement.

Within reconciliation and conflict processes, dialogue is occurring where there was once animosity and alienation – this engagement between groups may become a significant and challenging change for those involved, catalyzing the transitions process for individuals and the group as a whole. Providing an overview of the process and establishing group guidelines helps to create a strong container in which the process can unfold. Outlining the transitions process helps to give participants a way of understanding their experience and a shared language for talking about it, as well as helping to ground them in the process. The structured framework of each week helps to guide the process and provide structure as transitions occur. Beginning to explore stories and identifying issues and relationships constitutes the *Endings* phase occurring

into weeks 3 or 4. There is a general pattern to what participants experience during this and other phases, and facilitators are prepared to see and respond to these issues in ways that support the process. While transitions happen at their own pace, facilitators can help to support their unfolding. Moving into weeks 4-7, the group more deeply explores issues around identity and history, often bringing up intense and difficult emotions. Because transitions do not always move in a straight line, participants may find themselves moving back and forth between *Endings* and the *Neutral Zone*. In weeks 8-10, participants explore reconciliation and develop a shared vision and doable plans for the future as the group moves into New Beginnings.

By moving through this process together, participants may experience increased trust and safety with the group; begin to tolerate and then to understand and even empathize with experiences of the other group; experience a transformation of identity and healing of historical wounds such that they are no longer defined by opposition to the other; and develop shared goals and vision for the future. After the formal process has ended and participants continue with their lives while working together on their shared project, others in the community who heard about the process, see the transformation that has occurred for participants, and now witness the work they are now doing towards a shared vision, may feel inspired to engage with the other group in new and different ways - or even participate in a dialogue process themselves. In this way, the dialogue has a ripple effect within the community of increased trust, new relationships, and mutual cooperation which increases the chances of resettlement and transitional success.

*Endings* force a letting go of the old way, which may include the attitudes, assumptions, beliefs, and relationships that shape our identity. This does not mean forgetting or denying, but shifting away from habituated patterns of thinking and acting, and the identity that has been formed around these patterns. This requires a level of acceptance of the past and the willingness

to remember and honor it in moving forward. In reconciliation, this may mean letting go of an image of a group of people or letting go of an identity that is defined in opposition to another group (Kelman, 2004). It may also mean needing to let go of status, power, relationships, personal identity, or group membership, which may result in sadness, anger, resistance, and the desire to grasp for what seems to be slipping away. In order to move forward, one may have to leave something behind; transforming the person one used to be in order to find who we will become.

Common emotions experienced during this phase are anger, grief, fear, depression, or helplessness. Participants may experience a lack of trust with the other group, a belief that engaging with them is either too risky or simply useless, a lack of unity within their own group, and a fear of being blamed. Because of this, participants may be unwilling to engage in dialogue, may blame the other group, focus on past wounds, or even express desire for revenge. In supporting participants through this phase of the process, the authors recommend persisting with the process while leaving options open and beginning with less threatening processes. They also recommend creating forums where mourning and grief can be expressed and potentially working within stakeholder groups first before asking them to work with the other group.

The *Neutral Zone* is the potentially confusing and uncomfortable in-between phase where the old way has been let go of, but the new way has not yet been discovered. One may feel lost, anxious, or impatient, but this phase cannot be rushed and people must pass through it in their own way and time. The Neutral Zone also has great potential for creativity, with the opportunity to create a new identity and way of being in the world and relating to others. It is important to remain patient and present with any feelings of disorientation or uncertainty – while this may be uncomfortable, it is also the space from which creative problem solving arises. Additionally, it is

helpful to know that this is a normal and necessary part of transition, this helps participants experience whatever is arising for them without extra layers of concern or judgement about the process. “The neutral zone creates space for creativity and growth, but the loss of familiar boundaries and supports creates a powerful temptation to jump at the first opportunity that looks or feels familiar.” (Bianco, Tint, & Clarke, 2012, p. 31)

Common emotions in the Neutral Zone include cautious optimism, frustration and disappointment with setbacks, and hope. Participants may experience a threat to group identity and a fear of intra-group divisions as old definitions of identity begin to dissolve. They may also experience a desire to move forward and engage with the other to find a different future. This results in a willingness to participate and engage in dialogue for a different future, while potential bumps in the process include slipping back into old identities and fragmentations occurring within groups. In supporting people in this phase, the authors recommend validating participants’ experiences of fear, disorientation, and uncertainty as normal and necessary parts of the process. They also recommend continuing to provide support and helping groups with internal divisions as well as encouraging experimentation and helping people connect with their purpose and what they care about.

The final phase of transition, *New Beginnings*, occurs when participants are emotionally ready to engage in a new way and embrace possibilities for the future. Here, a new identity, way of doing things, or opportunity for growth comes into focus. “New values, attitudes, and, most of all, new identities, have emerged. The New Beginning does not erase the past; a new identity has emerged that includes a new and different understanding of what the past means.” (Bianco, Tint, & Clarke, 2012, p. 32). The transition into new beginnings cannot be mandated, but requires an inward readiness which emerges on its own schedule.

Common emotions in New Beginnings include hope, pride, excitement, and fear. Here participants may really begin to believe that progress is possible and participants feel empowered to take initiative. This results in trust and individuals across conflicting parties working effectively together, actions and words which uphold the other group, and participants, rather than facilitators, leading and taking initiative. In supporting people in this phase, it can be useful to recognize and celebrate successes and progress, continue to orient towards future growth and application, and to be mindful of new transition cycles.

The authors also note that transitions are not always linear and that one may move back and forth between different phases. They also emphasize that transitions occur at their own pace and that emotions may become so intense that one may need to pull back before being able to move forward. People facing these difficult aspects of transition need patience, love, understanding, and support for their transition to move forward in a deep and meaningful way.

In addition to helping participants process their experience and informing how facilitators support and engage with the process, the Transitions Framework also informs the design of the 11 week dialogue program. Laying out the dialogue modules, one can see how the movement from *Endings* to the *Neutral Zone* to *New Beginnings*, is reflected in the structure of the process. Each module is roughly four hours and is defined by a series of activities, their method/content, and their goals. Each session begins with opening questions to build cohesion and group unity, includes a break for self-care, and ends with a closing question to ground the group and reflect on the experience. Session 0, the orientation, consists of an overview of the process and its purpose, as well as an introduction to principles of dialogue, listening and dialogic questions, and safety. Session one begins by building the container through the formation of group guidelines, followed by an exploration of community and of goals, intended to reveal community vision and

build cohesion. Session two has two main sections; diaspora stories, intended to develop mutual empathy and explore deeper material, and a reflection and debrief, intended to identify shared experiences and continue building cohesion. Session Three begins by outlining the transition framework of Endings, Neutral Zone, and New Beginnings and asking participants to explore their personal experience in light of this framework; next, in small and large groups, participants begin to identify shared, as well as individual, experiences. Session four begins by revisiting work from previous sessions, uncovering and exploring challenges and divisions; this is followed by an exploration of group strengths, empowering participants to meet challenges. Session five begins by exploring participant identities, uncovering patterns and identity issues, followed by an exploration of the connection between identity and conflict in participants' lives, normalizing the difficulty of the topic and deepening the dialogue. Session six encourages participants to connect perspectives on history and conflict, seeing differences in historical group narratives; next, participants create a shared timeline, highlighting significant markers for each group. Session seven continues the exploration of history and of deep-rooted feelings and issues around the past, participants then begin to connect their experience of history to the Transitions Framework. Session eight introduces and explores the meaning of reconciliation and deepens connections between reconciliation and transition; next, participants explore possibilities of reconciliation within their own community. Session nine continues the exploration of reconciliation and then begins looking towards the future, personalizing issues and considering future generations before identifying topics that might be part of an action plan. Session ten begins by reflecting back on important accomplishments of the process before moving on to small and large group explorations of specific and doable plans for the future; the session ends with a longer opportunity for reflection and sharing.

While the emotions and behaviors mentioned above can give some indication of where individuals and groups are within the transition process, the authors also utilized various methods for evaluating the success of transformation and reconciliation and attempting to improve the process. They conducted pre-dialogue interviews and surveys to establish a baseline; mid-dialogue surveys, observation, and facilitator reflections to assess how the process was proceeding; and post-dialogue interviews and surveys to compare to the baseline and measure intended outcomes of participant experience. Key objectives included intergroup tolerance, understanding of multiple perspectives, increased sense of safety and trust among participants, and the creation of a shared vision for the community's future. Indicators for these outcomes include verbal acknowledgment of different ethnic groups, willingness to listen and self-reported change, changes in comments about safety or fear and an increased willingness to be uncomfortable, and an expression of consensus on goals and vision.

Figure 4 (continued on next page): Logic model of the Group Dialogue process.

Program	Inputs	Activity	Output	During	Immediate	Long-term	Impact
Group Dialogue -Barbara Tint -See also: phases of dialogue*	-Trained facilitators -Sensitivity and preparation around potential cultural issues -Outreach, recruitment, and selection of participants, considering age, gender, ethnicity and nationality, power, influence, language ability, and receptivity to dialogue -Between 12 and 18 participants -Funding and an adequate space	-Meetings once a week for 11 week, 4 hours each -Each sessions beings with opening question to build cohesion and group unity, includes a break for self-care, and ends with a closing question to ground the group and reflect on experience -Week 0 consists of an overview of the process and its purpose, and an introduction to principles of dialogue, listening and dialogic questions, and safety. -Week 1 builds the container by forming group guidelines, followed by an exploration of community and of goals, intended to reveal community vision and build cohesion. -Week 2 has two main sections; diaspora stories, intended to develop mutual empathy and explore deeper material, and a reflection and debrief, intended to identify shared experiences and continue building cohesion. -Week 3 outlines the transition framework of endings, neutral zone, and new beginnings and asks participant to explore their personal experience in light of this framework; next, in small and large groups, participants begin to identify individual and shared experiences -Week 4 revisits work from previous sessions, uncovering and exploring challenges and divisions, followed by an exploration of group strengths, empowering participants to meet challenges. -Week 5 explores participant identities, uncovering patterns and identity issues, followed by an exploration of the connection between identity and conflict in participants' lives, normalizing the difficulty of the topic and deepening the dialogue. -Week 6 encourages participants to connect perspectives on history and conflict, seeing differences in historical group narratives; next, participants create a shared timeline, highlighting important markers for each group. -Week 7 continues the exploration of history and deep-rooted feelings and issues around the past, participants then begin to connect their experience of history to the transition framework. -Week 8 introduces and explores the meaning of reconciliation and deepens connections between reconciliation and transition; next, participants explore possibilities of reconciliation within their own community.	-12 to 18 participants who completed the process -Agreed upon project or vision for them to work towards together	-Endings: shifting away from habituated patterns of thinking and acting and the identity that has been formed around them. This may result in sadness, anger, resistance, and the desire to grasp for what seems to be slipping away. Participants may experience a lack of trust with the other group, a belief that engaging with them is either too risky or simply useless, a lack of unity within their own group, and a fear of being blamed. Because of this, participants may be unwilling to engage in dialogue, may blame the other group, focus on past wounds, or even express desire for revenge. -Neutral Zone: the potentially confusing and uncomfortable in-between phase where the old way has been let go of, but the new way has not yet been discovered. Common emotions include cautiousness optimism, frustration with setbacks, and hope. Participants may experience a threat to group identity and a fear of intra-group divisions as old definitions of identity begin to dissolve; they may also experience a desire to move forward and engage with the other to find a different future. This results in a willingness to participate and engage in dialogue for a different future, while potential bumps in the process include slipping back into old identities and fragmentations within groups. New beginnings: New values, attitudes, and identities have emerged. Rather than erasing the past, these new identities include a new and different understanding of what it means. Common emotions in New Beginnings include hope, pride, excitement, and fear. Participants may	-Intergroup tolerance and understanding of multiple perspectives indicated by verbal acknowledgment of different ethnic groups, willingness to listen and self-reported change -Increased sense of safety and trust among participants indicated by changes in comments about safety or fear and an increased willingness to be uncomfortable -Creation of a shared vision for the community's future	-Understanding of multiple perspectives -Increased sense of safety and trust among participants -Creation of a shared vision for the community's future -Measured via post-dialogue surveys and interviews -Ripple effect in the community -New individual identity which is no longer defined in opposition to the other (successful transition)	-Healing of historical wounds -Creating greater chance of resettlement success and reintegration -Supporting communities capacity to work in a unified manner to address the challenges of living as immigrants in a new land

		<p>-Week 9 continues the exploration of reconciliation and then begins looking towards the future, personalizing issues and considering future generations before identifying topics that might be part of an action plan.                  -Week 10 reflects back on important accomplishments of the process before moving on to small and large group explorations of specific and doable plans for the future; the session ends with a longer opportunity for reflection and sharing.</p>		<p>really begin to believe that progress is possible and participants feel empowered to take initiative. This results in trust and individuals across conflicting parties working effectively together, actions and words which uphold the other group, and participants, rather than facilitators, leading and taking initiative.</p>			
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### Emerging Themes

Each of these models seems to follow a common pattern, both in their structure and in what they observe during and after a successful conference (see *Appendix* for a comparison chart). Each model has a stage of individual/group preparation, followed by an initial exploration of issues, which develops into immersion and a deeper exploration. Each model also suggests that while immersed in the process, the group experiences a point of transition, followed by the emergence of outcomes associated with transformation. Following this, participants may make agreements with one another and bring closure to the process. Finally, additional meetings or follow-up groups may help participants bring what they have discovered out into the world.

In Gender Reconciliation (GR) (Keepin, Brix, & Dwyer, 2007) and Group Dialogue (GD) (Bianco, Clarke, & Tint, 2012), a majority of the preparation work occurs once the group has convened. This is in contrast to Restorative Conferencing (RC) (Rossner, 2013), where a majority of preparatory work, averaging about 25 hours, is done before the actual meeting. Despite this, the models share a number of common practices in preparing the group and individuals to engage skillfully. These include selecting participants and facilitators such that there is balanced representation; procuring a private space; introducing the process, its principles, and its purpose; establishing of group guidelines; preparing participants to reflect on and express their experience skillfully; bringing attention to ways of communicating; relaying skills for self-regulation and staying engaged with the process; and forming a shared intention or vision for the future. The shared intention/vision is not an explicit part of Rossner's model, though both GR and GD have specific activities designed to bring it forth.

Each model, in its own way, eases into the exploration of personal experience of the conflict. In RC, participants begin exploring their experience of the crime with the facilitator

even before meeting face to face. In the conference itself, they begin by recounting the story of how the crime took place. The GR model begins the exploration in social/cultural arenas, then makes connections to individuals' experiences. The GD model begins with participants sharing their stories and identifying shared experiences. Each model acknowledges the likelihood of some awkwardness or discomfort in this phase. Additionally, some challenge may emerge as participants potentially experience fear, sadness, or anger and contract into shame or blame.

As this phase develops, participants begin exploring more personal and potentially triggering material. At this point, challenges or divisions may emerge as participants touch on volatile issues. Rossner notes the importance, at this stage, of the development of rhythm through a shared mood and mutual focus of attention. In GD, continued engagement is facilitated through helping participants understand their experience in light of the Transitions Framework. In GR, this continued engagement is facilitated through re-connection to the group intention and periods of contemplative practice.

Now that particular challenges or divisions have been evoked in the group, participants enter into the heart of the process. More intense emotions may arise as painful memories and deep rooted feeling around the past surface. Rossner suggests that the challenge here is for these intense emotions to be brought forth with minimal blame and defensiveness, allowing for the deepening of emotional entrainment, rather than disconnection. Here, the GD model focuses on issues of identity and of history, breaking the group apart to create their historical timelines, then coming back together to create a shared timeline. Somewhat similarly, the GR model breaks into same-sex groups to explore issues before reconvening in a mixed group to share what has emerged.

Each model indicates that in the midst of this territory, a kind of transition point may occur, following which new values, attitudes, and identities begin to emerge. In GD, this is facilitated through dialogue on the meaning of reconciliation and how that might look within the community. In the GR model, this transition occurs through *empathetic identification*, or when participants begin to perceive the truth of the other as the truth of their own experience. In the RC model, emotional intensity and entrainment culminate in one or more *turning points*, where rhythm and entrainment coalesce and people are brought together in a feeling of ritual group intensity. In the GR model, through empathetic identification, participants may even intuit an underlying unity, or single heart-mind, in which self and other are the same. This seems to parallel ‘collective effervescence’ and what Rossner describes as the realization of belonging to a shared moral community. Similarly, the GD model describes participants’ experience of hope, pride, and a sense of trust across what were once conflict lines.

Following this transition, each model describes participants as experiencing positive emotional energy and feeling inspired to take actions or say things which uplift the other group. High-solidarity behaviors such as laughing together or hugging may also emerge. Also common are symbolic representations of the new relationship and agreements for the future. In GR, these commitments are made personally as part of a ritual; in RC, they may appear as agreements created and signed by both parties; and in GD they appear as group action plans for the future. Furthermore, the GD model suggests anchoring the experience in community symbolism. Similarly, in the GR model, participant-designed rituals include an offering to the other group. In RC, these symbols may emerge organically, for example, as a gift to the other or an exchange of apology and forgiveness.

The models also share a closing period. In RC, participants may share tea and cookies as they transition out of the ritual space and back into their everyday life. In the GD model, participants reflect back on the process and consolidate important insights. Similarly, the GR model ends with a sharing of key insights and practices for taking learnings back into home lives and workplaces. Finally, each model suggests continued meetings as a part of the process; or, in the case of GD, working together on the co-created community action project.

Again, each model follows a common pattern of preparation; initial exploration; deeper exploration; transition; uplifting of the other, symbolic representation, and agreements; closing; and follow-up. The models also note similar challenges, emotions, and behaviors during each of these phases. Additionally, while each model has distinct activities and ways of structuring the process based on this, those activities share basic common themes in each phase.

#### Exploration of Key Themes: Attunement and Integration

Based on this, I would offer a simple model of how transformative encounters in conflict processes proceed: beginning with preparation work, moving into beginning exploration, then immersion, then a point of transition, then agreements and closing, and finally, follow-up work. I also would also suggest that there are specific challenges within each phase and that there are key elements or components which allow each of these phases to mature and transition to the next phase. Furthermore, there seem to be two somewhat challenging transition points which transformative encounters pass through. The first of these is simply for the conflicting groups to step in and begin a sincere attempt at dialogue at all. Essentially, it is the willingness to step into unknown and potentially frightening territory. The second, and more formidable challenge, is for groups to enter deeply and mindfully enough into that territory, and the pain constellated around it, for an internal/relational shift(s) to occur.

The key to this shift, from the Neutral Zone to New Beginnings as the Transition Framework would have it, is what Keepin et. al calls *empathetic identification* and what Rossner refers to as a *turning point*. These concepts mirror what Siegel and Hartzell (2003) call *attunement* - where through mirror neurons, the emotional state of one person resonates in the mind of another. An individual then “feels felt” and both parties experience an invigorating sense of joining. We might imagine empathetic identification and attunement as gradual processes which build and come to fruition in one or more turning points. Siegel and Hartzell suggest that attunement is a key process by which *integration*, or the coming together of separate parts to form an integrated whole, occurs. This can happen within an individual and/or within a group/relationship. Interestingly, in this process, both individuality and joining are increased: people become more fully themselves and at the same time more deeply connected to each other. This mirrors what the models suggest as outcomes of a successful interaction: group solidarity, uplifting of the other, increased understanding and compassion, increased freedom and energy, and new identities not confined by opposition to the other.

Siegel and Hartzell (2003) also illuminate key antecedents for attunement and practices of integrative communication. Firstly, they note that mirror neurons pick up on intention, indicating the importance of sincerity and mutual intention or vision for healing and reconciliation. They also discuss the importance of congruence, or a matching of verbal and non-verbal signals. A spirit of simplicity and truthfulness can support this congruence, as can helping individuals become aware of their nonverbal signals and when they are incongruent with their words or values. They also discuss the importance of modeling congruence and how that can help others become congruent themselves. Additionally, they emphasize the importance of bilateral communication, or communication across the hemispheres of the brain. This is

essential to emotional meaning-making, forming a coherent and organized sense of self, and the integration of past experience. They suggest that this communication can be improved by bringing awareness to both the content and process of experience and through mindfulness of bodily sensations. Finally, they outline seven practices for integrative communication: awareness of one's internal state and the nonverbal signals of others; aligning one's state of mind with that of the other; opening to the other's perspective/experience; communicating with respect and making the internal external; sharing openly in the verbal and nonverbal give/take of communication; helping make sense of the experience of others; and respecting the dignity of and sovereignty of each individual's mind. These practices reflect preparation work done in each model, as participants practice expressing their emotions, becoming aware of multi-level communication, and asking dialogic question/listening. These practices also hint at what facilitators should aim to bring forth in the structure of activities and in their style of facilitation and modeling.

Siegel (2003; 2010) also suggests storytelling as key to integration and mindsight as the essential skill for understanding one's own experience and the experience of others. Essentially, mindsight is the capacity to perceive with clarity our own mental and emotional activities without being swept away by them. Mindsight, through awareness and intention, also allows us to modify or regulate the flow of information and energy that make up our mental and emotional activities – in other words, mindsight gives us choice. Combined with empathy, this also allows us to begin sensing into the internal state of others. Beyond the 5 physical senses, our awareness of our body, and our awareness of our mental and emotional activity (mindsight), this calls upon a kind of relational sense – a sensing of our connection and interrelation with others. Practices that involve awareness of the body, such as yoga or mindfulness of breathing, hone our awareness

and improve mindsight. Storytelling, giving words to our internal experience, not only helps us see ourselves clearly and develop internal coherence, but helps build a bridge by which others can perceive our internal state.

Siegel (2010) and Hartzell (2003) give us another way of understanding the transformation that can occur in conflict processes. From this perspective, as participants share their stories more deeply, they tune into themselves, and they also open a way for other participants to begin attuning with them. Through tuning into themselves and attuning to others, participants experience an internal and relational re-organization which results in greater personal and interpersonal integration. Key ideas for supporting attunement which can also be applied to conflict resolution processes are mindsight, integrative communication, and storytelling.

Having explored attunement and integration of Siegel and Hartzell's perspective, I will now discuss integration first from Kelman's (2004) perspective of reconciliation as identity change and then from Bohm's (1981; 1996) perspective on dialogue, fragmentation, and wholeness. Having explored integration from these two perspectives, I will discuss Bowling and Hoffman's (2003) conception of the "integrated" mediator and their role in supporting transformation.

Kelman (2004) suggests that reconciliation can be understood as a shift in identity. Within intense and prolonged conflict situations, the negation of the other may come to be perceived as a significant aspect of one's identity. The result of this is that an important aspect of one's own identity is that one is not the other. Indeed, the existence of the other identity may come to be experienced as a threat to one's own identity. Reconciliation involves the removal of the negation of the other as a central component in one's own identity. This may go beyond the

acceptance of the legitimacy of the other and towards the development of a common identity, which transcends and includes one's previous identity. It is important to note that this involves a strengthening, rather than a weakening, of each party's core identity. This is a deep and essential point: while an individual may feel or perceive that the negation of the other is indeed the core of their identity, upon deeper inquiry and dialogue, they discover a deeper and more essential aspect of their being. They discover that in letting go of the negation of the other and allowing a new identity and relationship to emerge, they are actually in greater integrity and alignment with what is most true to them. This parallels Siegel and Hartzell's understanding of integration and is an accessible and helpful way of understanding what is meant when the Transitions Framework equates New Beginnings with the emergence of a new identity.

Moving forward, I will explore Bohm's (1981; 1996) understanding of what occurs in conflict processes and connect that understanding specifically to the ideas of attunement and integration. To Bohm, the external crisis and conflict which we confront in conflict resolution processes is a reflection of a deeper underlying fragmentation which has occurred in our relationship to the world. He suggests that a fragmented way of thinking and seeing, of breaking the world up into separate parts and imagining the self as similarly fragmented and separate from the world, is the root cause of conflict and constitutes a fundamental confusion about our relation to the whole. He suggests that the confusion is caused by imagining that our mental representations are true descriptions of reality, rather than constructed ways of seeing. Taking actions from this confused and fragmented perspective necessarily results in the manifestation of confusion, fragmentation, and conflict in the world.

Yet, to impose any other fixed worldview in an attempt to make things right is fundamentally flawed, as even to impose a unitive worldview is to confuse a mental

representation for a true description of reality. Thus, the internal, interpersonal, and intercultural conflicts we experience are not so much problems that can be solved, as they are paradoxes created by the inherent contradiction and incoherence of mistaking our fragmented thinking as the truth. Rather than attempting to eradicate a perceived problem, a new approach is required, namely, sustained attention to the paradox itself. According to Bohm, the “root paradox” is the apparent separation of the “self” that is thinking and feeling and that which is thought and felt.

Bohmian Dialogue can thus be conceptualized as a collective attempt to bring internal and collective contradiction and paradox into awareness. Key to this process is attentiveness to, and suspension of, assumptions and judgements. This means giving attention to bodily reactions, emotions, and thoughts. With suspension and attentiveness as a basis, one can then begin to develop proprioception of thought. That is, awareness of and immediate feedback about the movement of thought. This may be understood as sustained attention to the paradox of the apparent separation between the content of thought and the process of thinking. As this process continues, one may experience “participatory thought”, or a mode of thought in which boundaries are sensed as permeable, objects have an underlying relationship with one another, and the movement of the world is sensed as participating in some vital essence. This is not dissimilar from Bohm’s own vision of the implicate order, in which the phenomena of the manifest world are understood as temporary aspects of the movement of a deeper underlying wholeness. Nor is it dissimilar from Wade’s (1998) description of a new level of consciousness which unites mind and heart to form a more integrated and inclusive meaning perspective. It also gives us a sense of what Keepin et. al (2007) might mean by the intuition of an underlying unity and of how that intuition may allow a more coherent, or integrated, reorganization of one’s worldview and sense of self.

“When we really grasp the truth of the one-ness of the thinking process that we are actually carrying out, and the content of thought that is the product of this process, then such insight will enable us to observe, to look, to learn about the whole movement of thought and thus to discover an action relevant to this whole, that will end the ‘turbulence’ of movement which is the essence of fragmentation in every phase of life.” (Bohm, 1981, p. 24).

So, just as actions taken from a fragmented view actualize fragmentation and conflict, actions taken from a perception of the underlying whole actualize that wholeness.

Kelman (2004) and Bohm (1981) present a number of helpful ideas towards understanding transformation and integration. Firstly, as Siegel and Hartzell (2003) already suggest, while it may be necessary to let go of old beliefs, attitudes, and identities, what is discovered upon doing this is actually a deeper aspect of one’s self (Kelman, 2004). And this discovery of a deeper aspect leads not only to greater connection with others, but deeper authenticity and integrity within oneself. Additionally, it is important to understand that fragmented thought and the conflicts that arise from it (including a conception of self which rests upon the negation of the other) not as a problem we can solve, but as a paradox to be attentive to. This is an important shift in orientation, and one that will inform the way in which facilitators and participants engage. Rather than looking for solutions, this shifts the attention to one’s own bodily reactions, emotions, and thoughts as one shares one’s experience and hears the experience of others. This, again, emphasizes the importance of what Bohm calls ‘proprioception of thought’, an idea almost identical to mindsight. It is through this reorientation of attention that “participatory thought”, and an intuition of a deeper underlying wholeness, begin to emerge. I would argue that this deeper underlying wholeness is, in fact, the deeper truth of who and what

we are – and coming into contact with this, however faintly or profoundly, allows a more integrated re-organization of one's self and world view.

Drawing from these perspectives, we might imagine entering into one of the conflict resolution models I have described. It is likely that we imagine ourselves as existing in opposition to the other: as victims or perpetrators; men or women; Somali or Ethiopian. Bohm would view this as the kind of fragmented thinking and seeing that divides us. Yet, to simply say “we're all the same” is neither an accurate assessment, nor any kind of meaningful or useful way of addressing the conflict. Rather, in telling our stories, we ought to be attentive to our internal process, suspending judgement and bringing attentiveness to the movement of thought and emotion, even as conflict and division arises in the group. As we bring collective attention to the divisions that emerge, we may begin to sense that the division itself is a product of thought; and we may begin to intuit our thinking, and the divisions it seems to create, as temporary appearances of a deeper underlying wholeness to which we both belong. From this realization, a new identity may emerge, which, while not denying our previous identity, is no longer confined by a negation of the other.

Moving forward to Bowling and Hoffman's examination of the “integrated” mediator, the authors contend that a mediator's presence – more a function of who they are than what they do – has a profound impact on the mediation process. While the authors are writing primarily about mediators, I would argue that their ideas also apply to facilitators in a wide variety of conflict processes, including those I have examined, as they share the essential job of “holding space” for the process.

Using rich metaphors from quantum physics, systems analysis, self-organization theory, and chaos theory, the Bowling and Hoffman (2000) identify two key implications for mediation

theory and practice: (1) there are phenomena at work in mediation that operate on a level of subtlety that we have only begun to fathom; and (2) mediation is a process that we can better understand as an integrated system, rather than as a set of discrete interactions between and among individuals acting autonomously. Based on this, they argue that the mediator's presence brings certain qualities into the process that exert a powerful influence and enhance the impact of the interventions employed by the mediator. They call this integration, and define it as a quality of being in which an individual feels fully in touch with, and able to marshal, their spiritual, psychic, and physical resources. This description of integration is not dissimilar from what Wade, Bohm, and Kelman discuss as a result of transformation. Integration provides a model for the parties, and by subtle means, aligns the parties and the process in a positive direction. Another way of saying this might be that the presence of facilitators who, themselves, have experienced certain transformations may, through subtle means, align the parties and the process towards a transformative outcome. Connecting this to Siegel, we might imagine how a facilitator's capacity to self-regulate in the midst of intense emotion and conflict, through mirror neurons, also supports the self-regulation of other participants. Similarly, a facilitator's attunement to both parties may serve as a kind of bridge that supports their attunement to each other. For example, Harry Anastasiou (personal communication, 2014) has shared how, during Greek-Turkish Cypriot dialogues, when the facilitators were Greek and Turkish Cypriots who had gone through the work together, they not only facilitated the dialogue, but in doing so embodied the reconciled relationship. This may also manifest through facilitators modeling authenticity and vulnerability in their own shares.

### Model of Transformative Encounters

Drawing from Bohm's perspective, we might understand transformative encounters as a process of collective inquiry into a conflict. This inquiry is conducted through mutual truth-telling. Truth-telling, as I use it here, means honesty about one's internal experience, particularly about the impact of the conflict on one's life. This kind of truth-telling cuts much deeper than our opinions or conclusions about how we are good or bad, or about how the other is right or wrong. In fact, these judgements may be what obscures our truth, may be ways of resisting what is most true within us. It takes a great deal of courage and self-awareness to let go of these ways of resisting and to begin stepping into the simplicity and vulnerability of telling the truth. Stories are a powerful way of helping us access our truth. When we really speak the truth, though, it is more than just words – it comes from a place deep inside of us and conveys something very intimate about who we are. To speak the truth is no small thing. It is an incredibly vulnerable and powerful act. It is to give voice to that within us which is small, and still, and entirely genuine. And when we witness this in another, if we are available, something within us recognizes that which has spoken, as an aspect of itself – and recognizes itself, as an aspect of that which has spoken. And when this happens, we truly see each other, perhaps for the first time – and a new relationship is born. A new relationship with ourselves, based on our connection to that within us which is true; and a new relationship with others, based in that recognition of what we share. This is Siegel and Hartzell's attunement and integration; Bohm's intuition of the implicate order; Keepin et. al's empathetic identification; Rossner's turning point; the inspiration for New Beginnings; and the deeper meaning of Kelman's assertion that letting go of the negation of the other, in fact, strengthens the core of our own identity.

My discussion is based upon the assumption that the truth is wanting to be spoken, that there is a natural and universal movement towards truthfulness, and that it has its own mysterious intelligence and process by which it emerges. We are seeking to give life to something previously unknown; rather than controlling the process, our work is to create conditions conducive to its unfolding, to care for what arises as needed, and to trust in and give ourselves to the new life that is being born within and between us. This said, my analysis of the models indicates a certain shared trajectory of the process, with certain challenges at certain phases, and with certain useful strategies for meeting those challenges. I am understanding this process as leading to increased integration within the group and within the individuals that make up the group. I am also understanding attunement as the key process by which an intuition of interconnection, and thus integration, becomes possible. Furthermore, I am understanding mindsight as the key skill that makes attunement possible. With this as my frame of reference, I will discuss how I understand the phases of a transformative encounter's unfolding and my recommendations as to how to support the process. It is my hope that this discussion will illuminate these patterns and strategies, helping us to more skillfully prepare, facilitate, and participate in transformative encounters. In writing my discussion, I will be alternating between participant and facilitator perspectives. I hope that the more personal participant perspective will offer a self-reflective and felt sense of the process, while the facilitator perspective will offer a more objective and practical perspective.

Let us say that in coming to a conflict resolution process, we have not yet let in the truth of the other. In fact, let us say that in all likelihood, there are aspects of our own deep truth regarding the conflict that we are yet to contact. We are, perhaps, still under the impression that our truth exists in opposition to the truth of the other, that we are in conflict and that only one

truth can win out. We may imagine – indeed we may have spent our life living out the idea - that we need to assert our truth over the other, or submit to their truth being imposed over us. We may even experience the truth of the other as an existential threat to ourselves. Yet, we are choosing to come together. Perhaps we intuit that there is another way, or simply that our current path is a dead-end. Whatever the case, we have gathered the courage to meet with the other in the hope of discovering something new. In stepping into the unknown, we may feel nervous, excited, or afraid. At the same time, we may feel the pull back into the known, and relative comfort, of our judgements of self and other.

As facilitators, there are several ways for us to support individuals as they first choose to come together. Firstly, voluntary participation in the process is essential, as it self-selects those who are willing to at least step into the unknown. Additionally, for the sake of balance, it is important to ensure a roughly equal number of participants and facilitators from each “side”. While some fear or nervousness is to be expected, taking time to address specific participant concerns is important for creating safety; similarly, giving participants a sense of the process, its underlying principles, and how it will likely unfold may help to create trust in the facilitators and the integrity of the process. We may encourage participants to begin reflecting on their experience and intentions, connecting to their truth and how they wish to express it. It may also be helpful to illuminate multilevel communication, perhaps introducing and practicing Siegel and Hartzell’s (2003) practices for integrative communication, preparing participants both to share skillfully and listen attentively. Periods of mindfulness practice, introduction to the skill of mindfulness, and offering practices for self-regulation may help participants feel their own truth more deeply and awaken sensitivity to the sharing of others.

Significant time in each of the models is dedicated to building cohesion, trust, and safety within the group and creating a strong container for the process to unfold in. The two main modalities for this are the establishment of group guidelines and collective intention. Establishing group guidelines is an essential part of building the container and participant trust and should not be neglected. Collective intention involves bringing forth individuals' sincere intentions for mutual healing, cooperation, and reconciliation so that they are understood as collective intentions of the process. While this may be implied in the fact of the encounter, making it explicit helps to unify the group around those intentions. In the group dialogue (GD) model, this is done through a dialogue intended to reveal community vision while in the Gender Reconciliation (GR) model there is a group invocation of qualities participants would like to bring forth and a ritual signifying the collective intention for healing. This is an important intention which the group will touch into again and again, so some sort of symbolic representation may prove helpful.

The preparatory phase is now complete and it is time for us to begin our process of mutual inquiry into the conflict. There may be some challenge here as we attempt to give voice to our truth, not as victims or perpetrators, but as witnesses to our life story and our lived experience of the conflict. We may feel awkward or uncomfortable as we begin to be honest and vulnerable about our experience of the conflict – and we may feel drawn to fall back into our old patterns of blame and shame. Slowly, though, we dip our toes into the water and share a bit of our truth; the other then shares a bit of their truth: You tell a truth - I tell a truth. And so the process of inquiry begins.

To begin this process of truth-speaking is the first minor challenge of the process. Each of the models I analyzed follows a similar gradual trajectory into this territory. Gender

Reconciliation and Group Dialogue begin more in the cultural/collective domain, connecting that to personal experience, and then transitioning primarily into that more charged and vulnerable domain. Restorative Conferencing begins with the story of crime, then moving into its effect on participants. A gradual movement into this territory seems to be helpful, allowing the emotional intensity of what is being shared to develop along with the level of trust and mutual empathy in the group. I would suggest having facilitators begin the rounds of sharing, modeling vulnerability and authenticity – this will make it much easier for participants to also step into that territory. If facilitators are not participating as part of the dialogue, their attuned listening and self-regulation may also serve to support participants in this phase. It may also be useful to periodically bring the group back to their collective intention/vision. Additionally, periods of mindfulness practice may prove instrumental in helping participants access their own truth while being available to the truth of the other. Remember, collective inquiry is about holding the apparently contradictory truths of self and other.

The process of inquiry continues to deepen and intensify. It deepens in the sense that we are becoming more connected to the truth of our own experience and more available to the experience of the other. It intensifies in the sense that as we access this territory, we also access a level of personal and collective pain and trauma that has constellated around certain events or issues. We feel a charge build in the group as these potentially volatile and triggering issues emerge. Our experience becomes increasingly intense and paradoxical as we attempt to hold our own emotional intensity along with empathy for the other; and the recognition of our own truth along with the recognition of the truth of the other. We may feel confused or disoriented, perhaps frightened by the intensity of what has emerged and pulled back into blame or shame. A crisis may emerge in the whole group or one of the subgroups, we may sense that a barrier has

been placed before us – we cannot figure out how to move forward, nor can we conceive of going back. We may also sense into the mysterious unfolding, and feel drawn forward into deeper levels of truth-telling.

This is a particularly challenging phase of the process, and there is some divergence between the models in how they choose to navigate it. As Rossner (2013) suggests, the primary challenge here and elsewhere is the minimization of stigmatization and defiance, allowing for the emergence of emotional entrainment. We might imagine stigmatization and defiance as ways of limiting our view and in fact turning away from the deepest aspect of our own truth, and the truth of others. GR and GD suggest that in addition to dialogue, it may be useful to utilize breaks, periods of silence, and forms of ritual – this allows truth to be accessed and spoken in ways that go beyond words. Additionally, both of these models divide the group for a period of intra-identity exploration before re-convening in the mixed group. This may help the groups process the most volatile material in a safer space before coming back together to speak to the key issues that emerged. We might imagine this as creating a space where participants, and their respective group, can connect more deeply to the heart of their own truth before sharing it with the other. Modeling and skillful intervention by facilitators is again quite important during this phase – the facilitators' capacity to stay present and connected to their own truth in the midst of turmoil is perhaps most essential. Furthermore, reconnecting to the group intention/vision and periods of mindfulness practice may be useful during this phase.

We have now entered into the heart of the process. We may experience what Bohm calls participatory thought, or the mode of thought in which boundaries are sensed as permeable, objects have an underlying relationship with one another, and the movement of the world is sensed as participating in some vital essence. This mode of thought also allows us to begin

holding, without contradiction, the seemingly contradictory perspectives and truths of the group. As entrainment and intensity reach a peak, one or more individuals may speak their truth, may truly show themselves, in a deep and moving way. The inner state of that individual resonates in our own consciousness, even in the shared consciousness of the group. We feel the other, and the other feels us, feeling them. Strangely enough, the truth of the other registers in our experience as our own truth. Moreover, through this inner doorway of attunement, a part of us intuits itself as not separate from the other. We may feel at-one with the group, swept into a unity which goes beyond the contradiction of fragmented thought and judgement. Our process of collective inquiry has revealed a truth which transcends and includes the apparent opposites of our individual truths.

As facilitators up to this point, we may have facilitated various activities, supported participant's developing mindsight, and even intervened or supported the group through various crises. This phase, though, is well beyond our capacity to control, it is truly in the hands, and hearts, of participants. All we can do here is step fully into the process along with them.

In the wake of this experience, we feel a strong sense of solidarity with the group, a realization that we belong to the same moral community. Furthermore, we feel that an internal shift has occurred, that some division or fragmentation inside has been restored to wholeness; that we are freer and more in contact with our own truth – and that our truth is no longer confined by opposition to the truth of the other. We feel trust and connection with the other, pride about what we have discovered together, and hopeful about the future. We may wish to celebrate together, to laugh, hug, and offer appreciation. We feel open-hearted, energized, and inspired. We may spontaneously make commitments for the future or offer a gift to the other.

Here, attunement has led to increased integration within individuals and the group as a whole. This phase is about affirming, grounding, and performing this new way of being and relating. At this point, participants will likely feel inspired to take the lead in celebrating, committing, and symbolizing. This said, it may be helpful to provide a basic structure for participants, allowing them the freedom to express, perform, symbolize, and commit as their hearts move them. In GR, these rituals consist of a blessing, an offering, and a commitment. In GD, this may look like spontaneous actions and words which uphold the other group, the intentional development of a specific and doable action plan, and the creation of community symbolism. In RC this may manifest as high-solidarity behaviors, the offering of a gift, the exchange of apology and forgiveness, or a mutually created and signed agreement. Again, this affirms and embodies the new way of being and relating, creates collective symbolism by which it is imprinted, and commits us to living out what has been realized.

We have now celebrated, affirmed, and committed to our new relationship with ourselves and the other. The arc of the process is ending and we are beginning to make the return, out of the ritual space, back into our everyday lives. We may wish to reflect on and organize our experience and feel excited about bringing our learnings back into the world. We may have a sense of completion – perhaps sad that the process is over, thankful for our experience, and at the same time ready for, even hopeful about, our return to the world. We feel drawn to closure.

As facilitators, we want to support a period of debriefing and closure, sealing the process and preparing participants to take what they have learned into their everyday life, where the next phase of growth can begin. This may include reflection on the process and consolidation of key insights. It may also be useful to brief participants on the challenges of re-entering the world after such an emotionally intense process and to discuss practices for re-integrating skillfully. A

period of ending, perhaps where participants share food and drink, may help close and seal the process. Closing and sealing refers to making the new realization the ground for further work and sealing the ritual space. If we refer back to the wound analogy offered by the GR process (Keepin, Brix, & Dwyer, 2007), we might imagine that we have entered into a wound and cleaned it by immersing in the process and speaking our truth; following that, we applied a soothing balm to the now clean wound as we realized our belonging to a shared moral community and began honoring and being honored by the other; finally, we wrap the wound in a clean bandage to keep it clean and safe as healing continues – we seal the process – by debriefing, coming to closing, and preparing to reenter the everyday world. Following the end of a process, we should make ourselves available, should difficulties with re-integration arise. Furthermore, if possible, the group should remain in contact – this will support future learning and growing and provide a community of connection. This may be done through future meetings or through mutual work on an action project or agreement the group has determined.

This brings us to the end of the process. While I have described this process as proceeding in a linear manner, it is unlikely to do so in practice. Expect a more cyclical proceeding, with individuals dipping into the truth of their experience, pulling back, and then dipping a little deeper. While I expect the general arc of the process to stay the same, the depth of transformation will be dependent on the depth of truth telling, which is dependent on the skillfulness of facilitators, the maturity of participants, and the amount of time and energy invested. Still though, this framework should convey a sense of the process, what may be useful in supporting it, and why.

### Conclusions, Limitations, and Recommendations

The purpose of this research was to explore transformative encounters in several different conflict resolution modalities, illuminating common patterns and themes, and creating a synthesized hypothesis of transformative encounters. A common pattern of unfolding did emerge, as did a number of shared practices throughout the process. A common mechanism for transformation, attunement, and a common outcome, integration, also emerged. Once a basis of trust and intention to engage has been built in the group, participants begin, tentatively at first, to share parts of themselves with the group. This is done through storytelling along with nonverbal modalities. Participants may encounter, and must bring awareness to, deeply held patterns of thinking and feeling. The storytelling deepens, as does emotional intensity. At the same time, participants' capacity for empathy and mindsight develops. At the height of the process, participants attune with one another, allowing for an internal and relational re-organization which results in greater personal and interpersonal integration. This integration is then affirmed, performed, and stabilized through interaction rituals and collective symbolism.

While the three modalities I examined differed in their size, area of focus, timeframe, methods, and structure, they did share a common pattern of unfolding, challenges, basic strategies for meeting those challenges, and outcomes. Still, given that I explored only three of many existing modalities, there is some question to how well these findings generalize to other processes. This said, this framework offers a way of thinking about what is occurring in these processes as well as some constructs (attunement, integration) we might look for to help us understand what is happening. Furthermore, the models I examined were applied in a variety of cultural settings, from the UK to African Diaspora communities in the US to men and women in India, South Africa, and the United States. This indicates some shared basic pattern of the

process. It is important to note though, that how this shared pattern manifests will certainly vary between cultures. Furthermore, both Tint (2012) and Keepin et al. (2007), whose work both involved some cross-cultural components, emphasize the importance of adjusting the structure, activities, and interventions of the process based on cultural conditions. Thus, the primary weaknesses of my model are the small sample size of processes I evaluated and uncertainty of the applicability across cultures of my particular descriptions of the process and suggested activities and interventions.

My recommendations for future research would include the examination of additional models from different contexts. This would help to further illuminate what is shared universally and what is specific to certain contexts. With an understanding of the essential flow, challenges, and necessary supports of the process, we can then adjust activities and interventions to best meet those needs depending on context. Furthermore, research on attunement and integration, particularly as relates to traumatic experience and healing, may further illuminate these concepts in a way that enriches our understanding of transformative encounters. I believe that this research area, particularly as it intersects with interpersonal neurobiology and contemplative psychology, has much to offer our understanding of transformation and conflict resolution processes. While I have tried to include some of these basic perspectives in this paper, the depth and expanse of what they have to offer is simply beyond the scope of this project. I would very much like to see the convergence of these fields in the future.



Appendix

Chart of the three models, divided by common phases, and color-coded within each row to highlight common activities, themes, and experiences of each phase.

Common stages/themes	Gender Reconciliation	Restorative Conferencing	Group Dialogue
Preparation	<p>Almost all of the preparation and trust building for participants occurs after the meeting has already been convened. They try to arrange for a close to equal number of men and women and male/female facilitators. Activities include a participatory invocation for mutual healing and reconciliation, the establishment of ethical guidelines and agreements, and exercises for awakening sensitivity and heightening awareness of multi-level communication. Participants are also introduced to the principles of the work and the basic process they will be going through.</p>	<p>Extensive preparation work occurs before the conference, on an average of about 25 hours. During this time, trust is built between participants and facilitators, participants are introduced to the process and their anxieties/concerns are addressed, and participants are prepared for emotions they may experience during the conference. Guidelines for the conference are also established. Practical considerations include a private space and an equal number of participants on each “side”. Participants are also encouraged to reflect on the effect of the crime and how they want to communicate that during the conference. Common emotions leading up to the conference include anger, fear, anxiety, embarrassment and shame.</p>	<p>Pre-meeting preparation includes selection of between 12 to 18 participants, trying to create a balanced representation between different groups. Once participants have been selected, much of the content of the weeks zero and one is focused on introducing the process, including principles of dialogue, and its purpose, building group cohesion, creating safety, and establishing a strong container. This is done through the formation of group guidelines and an exploration of community vision and goals. It is important to build this trust and cohesion, as group members may be feeling apprehensive about their involvement and engaging with the other.</p>

<p>Beginning</p>	<p>Exploration begins in social/cultural arenas, then making connection to individual's experiences. The focus then shifts to the personal domain, often touching on volatile issues/concerns. Some difficulty may arise here as participants are challenged to explore often unacknowledged and potentially painful material.</p>	<p>Conferences often begin with participants recounting how the crime took place. Often, there is some awkwardness and discomfort as this begins. The development of rhythm through a mutual focus of attention and a shared mood is essential. As the conference continues, participants begin exploring how they were affected by the crime.</p>	<p>Participants begin to share their stories, identifying shared experiences and building mutual empathy. This process of engaging with a group that may define themselves in opposition to may be challenging, as participants are forced to let go of this old identity. Participants may feel sad, angry, wanting to blame, or afraid of being blamed. To help with this process, participants are introduced to the transitions framework and asked to explore their individual and collective experiences in light of that. Particular challenges or divisions may begin to emerge.</p>
<p>Immersion</p>	<p>Now that these concerns have arisen and the group has begun to explore them internally and collectively, the group breaks into same-sex groups to explore them more deeply. Having met separately for some time, the groups re-convene for the cross-gender truth-forum.</p>	<p>As participants move into their personal experiences, more intense emotions may begin to emerge. The challenge here is for these to be expressed with minimal blame and defensiveness, allowing for the emergence of emotional entrainment, rather than disconnection.</p>	<p>Participants begin an exploration of deep rooted feelings around the past and the painful effect of the conflict on individual's lives. This may be a difficult period in the process, as painful memories surface and the old definitions of identity begin to dissolve.</p>
<p>Transition</p>	<p>In the heart of immersion and exploration of challenging and emotionally charged issues, a turning point can occur through what the authors call <i>empathetic identification</i>. This is when participants perceive the truth of the other as the truth of their own</p>	<p>Participants develop balance and rhythm, getting into the flow and becoming immersed in the interaction, building emotional intensity and entrainment. This culminates in one or more <i>turning points</i>, where rhythm and entrainment coalesce and disruptions</p>	<p>Following the deep dive into identity and history, participants begin to explore the meaning of reconciliation and what that might look like within their own community. This creates a space for new values, attitudes, and identities to emerge. Participants may feel hope, pride, and a sense of trust</p>

	<p>experience. Their hearts open and they are able to let in the experience of the other. As this occurs, participants may even intuit an underlying unity, or single heart-mind, in which self and other are the same.</p>	<p>cease, bringing people together in a feeling of ritual group intensity. This results in a feeling of group solidarity and a realization of belonging to a shared moral community.</p>	<p>across what were once conflict lines. They may say things and take actions which uphold the other group and feel inspired to lead and take initiative themselves, rather than waiting for facilitators.</p>
<p>Agreements and closing</p>	<p>Participants construct rituals to honor and uplift the other group, involving an offering and a personal commitment made by each participant. In closing, participants share key insights, ask questions, and learn practices for taking their learnings back in to home lives and workplaces.</p>	<p>Following successful turning point(s), participants experience positive emotional energy and engage in high-solidarity behaviors such as laughing together, hugging, and synchronization of gestures and gazes. Additionally, symbolic representations of the new relationship may emerge, such as an agreement created and signed by both parties. Finally, a closing period, perhaps with tea and cookies, helps to bring participants out of the ritual space and back into their everyday life.</p>	<p>After exploring reconciliation, participants begin looking towards the future, personalizing issues and coming up with potential topics before creating a specific and doable action plan for the future. Participants also have the chance to reflect back on the process, consolidating important insights, celebrating each other and what they have accomplished together, and anchoring the experience in community symbolism.</p>
<p>Afterwards</p>	<p>Participants who can continue to meet monthly or bi-monthly.</p>	<p>Rosner suggests future meetings following a successful conference may help recharge participants with positive emotional energy.</p>	<p>Participants continue to meet as a group as they determined, working together on their community action project.</p>

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