

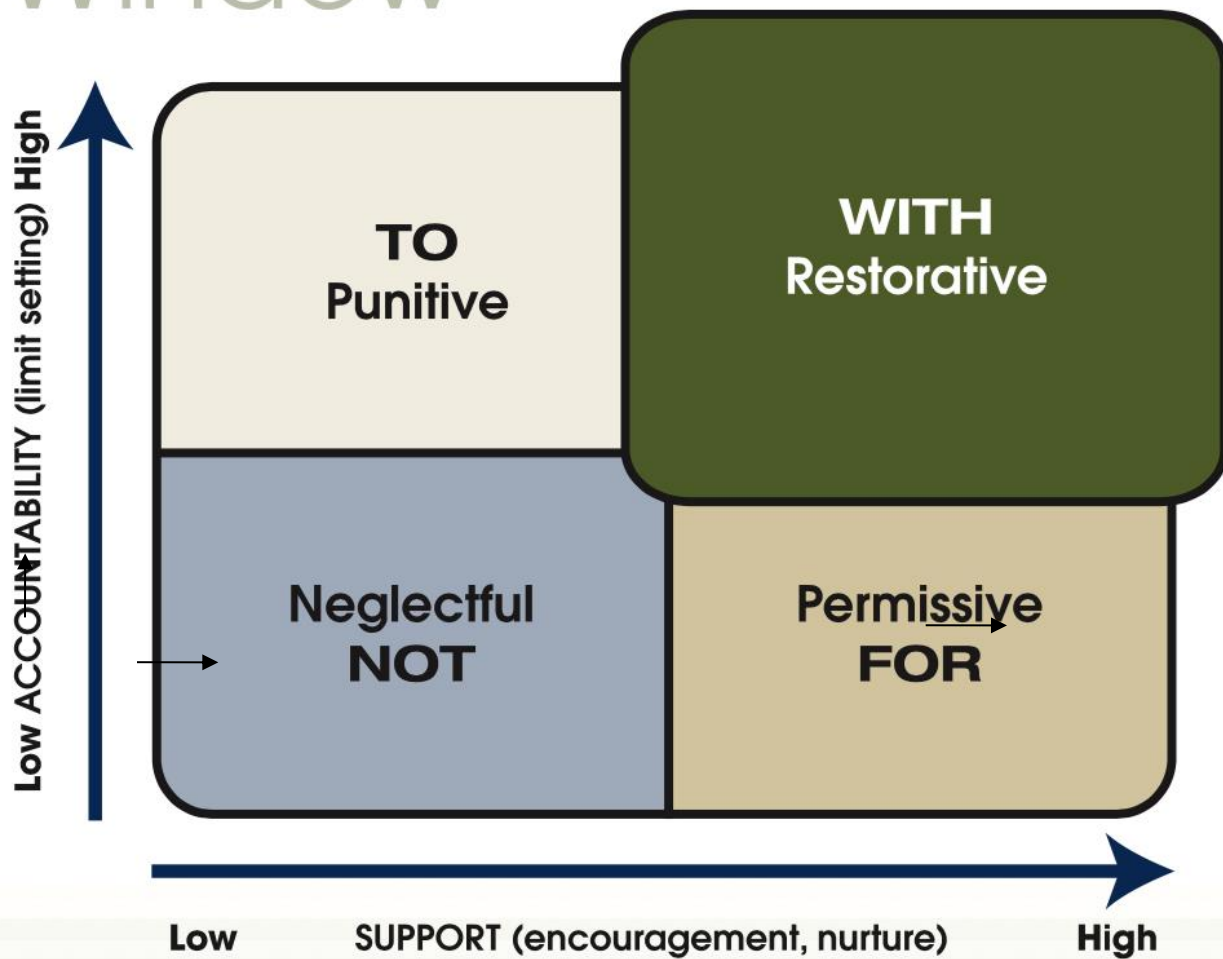
## THE SOCIAL DISCIPLINE WINDOW<sup>1</sup>

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# Social Discipline Window

Based on the work of Ted Wachtel



<sup>1</sup> Adapted by David Dyck from Ted Wachtel and Paul McCold (2004), *From Restorative Justice to Restorative Practices*. Please see [www.realjustice.org/articles.html?articleId=399](http://www.realjustice.org/articles.html?articleId=399).



## LABEL DESCRIPTIONS FOR THE SOCIAL DISCIPLINE WINDOW

This particular framework looks at the intersection of supporting people and holding them accountable. While we may draw on all four quadrants depending on the situation, time, or context, people and systems often have preferences or “habits” for how they address problematic behaviour.

### **Neglectful:**

The Neglectful quadrant is where problems are ignored. Often people take this approach hoping that the situation will resolve itself or the person will eventually “get it” on their own. It is not unusual that persons adopting this strategy will hint at their disapproval, but these clues are not always caught. We all have blind spots and so may not notice when our behaviour is out of sync with others. This is often more noticeable among those with more limited “people” skills. When leaders operate out of the Neglectful quadrant they are generally adopting a passive or avoiding stance towards the issues and people.

### **Permissive:**

Another frequent strategy is to inadvertently support the questionable behaviour. This occurs, for example, when leaders encourage others to pick up the workload for a weaker team member, usually without talking to the person in question (e.g. to answer the phone for the person when they arrive late rather than having a conversation about the pattern). Often this is viewed by the individual as supportive and as a tacit consent to their behaviour. It is not unusual that people will believe their circumstances are unique and therefore worthy of differential treatment. What is differential to one person may be preferential to another. This approach runs the danger of being experienced by those watching as enabling or Permissive. The Permissive quadrant also generally involves passivity and/or accommodation.

### **Punitive:**

The Punitive quadrant is where the organization takes action to try to change or suppress unwanted behaviours. Disciplinary responses often fall into this quadrant, whether they be verbal warnings, suspensions or other forms of punishment or reprimand. If the punitive action comes as a surprise to the person they often feel victimized, believing themselves to have been treated unduly harshly because the emphasis is on addressing the “out of step” behaviour without much or any emphasis on supporting the person involved. When leaders operate out of the Punitive quadrant they are generally employing coercive/impositional power and will usually be viewed (by some) as aggressive or unduly competitive.

### **Transformative/Restorative:**

The final quadrant depicts the Transformative/Restorative option. This approach involves attempting to address problematic conduct while still actively supporting the person(s) involved. The person exhibiting problematic behaviour is seen as a participant in problem-solving and the situation as a moment for potential learning and development. Leadership actively invites them into the process of considering and authoring change. It is transformative in that it is this combination of leadership behaviours that are most likely to yield positive, sustainable change (though not necessarily immediately). It is restorative in the sense that the emphasis is on restoring the person to their full place and role within the community/system, rather than on retribution. This quadrant involves the attempt to use collaborative power and involves the adoption of assertive behaviours.