

## Residential Counselor 101 part 5: Scout Skills & Processing Key Concepts

The Aspect Compass, part of the Meta-Compass Model, divides areas of the brain and aspects of the psyche into four parts called: The Artist, The Scout, The Warrior, and The Chief.

The Artist represents those parts of the brain and psyche that understand the world in terms of emotions. The Artist communicates, in terms of feelings and moods, to the rest of the brain. Helping The Artist feel centered involves making The Artist feel heard and seen. Creative arts activities can be emotionally centering activities. Co-Regulating with others and Experiencing empathy from others is especially centering. Empathic Listening is a great technique for helping clients to experience empathy.

The Scout represents those parts of the brain and psyche that are tasked with exploring the world, trying to make sense of it, and reporting back to the rest of the brain. The Scout tends to over-analyze and can become very disorganized (in other words, thinking becomes disorganized). Having clients exercise the Scout skills of Accurate Listening and Accurate Reporting are centering for this part of the psyche. Listening Checks are an effective tool for teaching Accurate Listening. Teaching Accurate Reporting often times involves using Clarifying Questions to help them describe a full sequence of events in the proper chronological order. It includes encouraging kids to report whatever happened in a calm tone of voice (exercising Reaction Inhibition and Stress Tolerance). Having kids Identify More Than One Possible Explanation for why something has occurred or someone has done something helps them exercise the executive skill of Flexibility.

The Warrior represents those parts of the brain and psyche that are in charge of both external behaviors and internal physiological actions. If The Warrior is heightened, it is very difficult for the Scout to function (in other words, if a kid is still agitated they're not going to be able to access their best thinking). The Warrior tends to automatically react (especially internally) to whatever The Artist is communicating. So to help The Scout improve at processing events, The Warrior and The Artist need to first be relatively calm.

The Chief represents those parts of the brain and psyche that are in charge of regulating The Artist, The Scout, and The Warrior. The Chief uses Executive Skills (and some other abilities such as Beliefs and Values) to influence a person's feelings, thinking, and behaviors.

Processing is a technique designed to strengthen a kid's inner Chief and inner Scout. It can be done throughout the residential day, but especially makes sense to use after an incident involving problem behaviors. Once a kid has been separated from the group and has generally calmed down, Processing provides a structured way to turn what happened into a learning experience. Processing is customized to the developmental level of the client. Some clients may only do the first step of processing, while other clients are capable of doing much more.

1. The first step in Processing an incident is to get the client to own up to their own behaviors. That's literally admitting to having done what problem behaviors resulted in their being separated from the group. This is best done without evoking feelings of shame and guilt. Those feelings get in the way of cognitive processing. In other words, those feelings make it harder to the kid to think about what happened and to learn from it.

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2. The second step in Processing is done with clients who developmentally are able to identify some feelings and/or thoughts that were part of the problem behavior incident. The goal is the same as step 1 – to get the kid’s inner Chief to accept Responsibility for their own behaviors, feelings, and thoughts.
3. The third step in Processing, to the extent the client is developmentally able, is to help them identify what they could have done differently and what they could do next time a similar situation arises.
4. The fourth step switches from a focus on personal responsibility to looking at Social Responsibility. This step involves having the kid identify what impact they think their behaviors had on people around them.
5. The fifth step moves beyond verbally accepting Responsibility to performing some action related to Relationship Repair. That might be a simple verbal apology, an apology card, or might be a Restitution such as beautifying a space, doing an extra chore that benefits others, or any other symbolic gesture showing that they want to be a positive member of the group. Restitution systems can be a powerful structure within a residential treatment program but need to be designed for a general level of consistency. The basic rationale behind Restitution is that you did something that made it more unpleasant for other people to live and work here; so now do something that makes it more pleasant for others. This is largely a symbolic action and shouldn’t take more than 10 to 15 minutes (in general). It provides kids with a great sense of closure that an incident has been resolved and that they can get a fresh start.
6. The sixth step goes even further in holding kids accountable to their living group, by having them review their processing with a group of peers and staff in a Group Explanation. The main purpose of the group is for the client to publicly accept responsibility for their own problem behaviors and to check the accuracy of their thoughts on how they impacted others. Two to five peers, who’ve been coached in some boundaries on giving feedback, then share how they were actually impacted and potentially give some constructive advice.

It takes a certain level of skill to facilitate a Group Explanation group; however, this skill can be learned by any residential staff. Setting up a Group Explanation system requires programmatic support so that this extremely powerful intervention is run in a consistent and productive fashion. If a physical Processing Form is used, that paper can serve as a helpful guide for a client to present at a Group Explanation. It can work well to have some restriction on privileges in place until a client completes any Relationship Repair / Restitution or Group Explanation expectations.