

EFFECTIVE APOLOGIES

Much research on what constitutes an *effective* apology and how that is related to forgiveness. Delivering an apology is a fundamental and validating process as it reassures the Receiver that they are not at fault/being *blamed for the Transgressor's actions*. Apologies allow Receivers to regain their *dignity and their sense of self-worth* (White, 2006). Transgressors who apologize *effectively (feel responsible/acknowledge specific harm)* are also less likely to re-offend (Schlenker & Darby, 1981; Choi & Severson, 2000). Aside from adult relationships, parents need to offer and teach children how to make effective apologies in age-appropriate ways.

- Apologies do not always result in greater levels of forgiveness, when Receiver has reason to believe the Transgressor is likely to commit future similar acts based on Transgressor's history, or believes transgression was deliberate (Gold & Weiner, 2000).
- Insincere apologies used strategically to minimize responsibility, control or manipulate (i.e. to try to win, get or avoid something) are ineffective and risk further damaging already fragile relationships (Ross, 2014).
- Simple, incomplete apologies (e.g. "I'm sorry") appear to lack sincerity and are deficient in addressing the core elements of an adequate apology. **Sufficient apologies** are more complete/elaborate, and address a **minimum** of: 1. Accepting responsibility, 2. Promising Restraint in the future, (e.g. based on a concrete plan), and 3. Offering restitution and repair (e.g. validating impact on the Receiver/rlshp. repair) (Reyna, 2014).
- When delivering an effective apology, the apologizer **must avoid** excuses, reasons, justifications, defensive statements and arguments, and *instead*, focus on the **impact of the transgression**.