

### **Class 6: Blame and Punishment**

#### Materials:

- Room with a white board

#### Goals:

- Comprehensively interrogate the question of "Why punish?"
- Explicitly steer away from real-world scenarios that students might have preconceptions about
- Interrogate how and why we blame

#### Timeframe (minutes):

0-10 minutes: Sides of the room

~7 minutes per goal of punishment

Remaining time: cumulative discussion

#### Lesson:

Start with the principle of charity spiel and also mention that this lesson is slightly more discussion-heavy, so it's fine to get up to stretch or go to the bathroom at any point.

#### Activity 1: Sides of the Room

1. Have you ever changed your behavior after being punished?
2. Have you ever changed your behavior out of fear of being punished?
3. Punishment helps you learn your lesson.

#### Question: What can punishment look like?

- Expected answers
  - Prison
  - Death penalty
  - Being grounded/having privileges taken away
  - Lecturing
  - Forcing somebody to apologize?
- Describe rehabilitation program. Is that a form of punishment?
- In this discussion, we are going to consider punishment as a response to an action that we don't want someone to repeat; it does not need to be a negative experience.

"These are the four commonly accepted goals of punishment."

Write on the board: deterrence, incapacitation, retribution, and rehabilitation

- Deterrence means we punish someone as an example; we do it so that other people won't do the act that person did.
- Incapacitation means we take the person who did the bad action out of society so they can't do it again.
- Retribution means we punish someone because they deserve it. They did the bad action, so they have to accept the consequences of that action
- Rehabilitation means we "punish" someone to get them to a point where they no longer feel a need to offend when they are reintroduced into society

For each goal of punishment:

1. What does punishment with this goal accomplish?
2. Will this goal be met with punishment?
3. How would the punishment have to happen for this goal to be met?
4. Should punishment have this goal?
5. Who does punishment with this goal prioritize? (victim, perpetrator, community, etc.)

Goal-specific questions:

- Incapacitation/rehabilitation:
  - What about sociopaths? How should we punish people who objectively can never learn their lesson?
- Retribution:
  - Who gets to decide what is an appropriate punishment for a specific action?
  - What about functionally victimless crimes?

Culminating Discussion:

- Which of these goals do you think our current judicial system achieves?
- Are there any goals of punishment we missed?
- How much should the victim of a crime have a say in the perpetrator's punishment?
  - Why do they *deserve* a say?
- What goals would your ideal system of punishment achieve?