



Punishment is the infliction of a penalty, pain or loss upon a person for an offense.

Amanda stole a power drill from the hardware store. She was caught by the store manager and is not allowed in the store for three months.

Consequences are the results or effects of an action, behaviour or condition.



Amanda wasn't able to buy supplies for work, employees now suspect she's stealing, the store lost money.



Accountability is accepting responsibility and acting to repair the harm done.

Amanda regrets her action. The manager requests a \$100 gift to be donated to charity. Amanda agrees, apologizes for her actions and saves up to purchase the gift certificate.

RESOURCES

www.sorrywatch.org
www.apologyletter.org
www.rjca-inc.org/apology-guidelines/
 Wagner, M. (2000) The Power of Apologies. Harvard University.



"Apologies have the capacity to positively transform relationships between individuals, groups, and nations. They provide processes by which parties in conflict can settle their differences in peaceful and constructive manners, while also preserving or restoring the dignity of both parties."

Aaron Lazare



ACCOUNTABILITY & APOLOGIES



**Do you have questions or need help with your apology?
 We're here to support you.**

qcj@liftcommunityservices.org
 (604)414-4203

Apologizing for a wrong-doing can be difficult. The purpose of this brochure is to help you think about how you might structure your apology and offer to make amends for the harm caused.

APOLOGY & RESTORATIVE JUSTICE

Accepting accountability for harmful behaviour and wanting to repair that harm is key to the Restorative Justice process. Often, this involves giving an apology. When giving an apology, it is important to recognize that a thoughtful and genuine apology can mend a relationship, while a thoughtless one may cause further harm and conflict (Wagner, 2000).

It can be hard to admit that we did something wrong and hurt another. However, remember that a wrong action does not define who we are as a person. Mistakes are a part of life and sometimes those mistakes hurt others. Accepting responsibility, seeking reparation and learning from the mistake so the behaviour isn't repeated is how we stop the cycle of harm.

TIPS FOR A GOOD APOLOGY

1. TAKE RESPONSIBILITY

Talk about what you did, not "what happened."

"I'm sorry for what I did", "I apologize", "I shouldn't have done that"

2. BE SPECIFIC

Address the action.

Instead of saying: "sorry for hurting you," try: "I'm sorry for breaking your car window and stealing your purse."

3. ACKNOWLEDGE THE EFFECT

Show that you have listened to the other person when they shared the impact that was had on them.

"I understand now that the cost of repairing your window meant that you couldn't afford to visit your sister that you haven't seen in over a year."

4. EXPLAIN, BUT DON'T EXCUSE

Sometimes people need to understand why you did what you did.

"I broke your car window because I saw a purse inside and I was behind on rent."

5. EXPLAIN HOW YOU WILL CHANGE BEHAVIOUR

Ideally, understanding the impact of your actions means you will change the harmful behaviour BUT don't make promises you don't intend to keep.

"In the future, I will not hurt others by stealing, even if I'm struggling financially."

6. MAKE SPACE FOR THEIR RESPONSE

Forgiveness isn't guaranteed. Be gracious and thank them for hearing you out.