

Values & Principles

Restorative Practices are underpinned by a set of values, these include:

Empowerment, Honesty, Engagement, Voluntarism, Healing, Restoration, Personal Accountability, Inclusiveness, Collaboration and Problem-Solving

Based on these values, the Principles of Restorative Processes were developed, these include:

RJ must be voluntary for all participants
RJ seeks a positive outcome for all parties
RJ is respectful not degrading

Visit www.restorativejustice.org.uk to view the principles in full

About the Consortium...

The Restorative Justice Consortium was formed in 1997. It brings together a wide range of people with an interest in restorative justice. These include organizations, policy makers, practitioners, academics etc. from many different contexts and from across the world.

The objects for which the Consortium is established are:

“To promote restorative justice for the public benefit as a means of resolving conflict and promoting reconciliation by:

- Promoting the use of restorative justice in the criminal justice system, in schools, in the workplace and elsewhere in the community in situations where conflict may arise
- Developing and promoting agreed standards and principles for evaluating and guiding restorative practice
- Advancing education and research on restorative justice and the publication of the useful results of that research”

Some Facts...

Participant Satisfaction

For both victims and offenders satisfaction is consistently high ranging from 73-90%. Fairness in mediation and conferencing processes is also consistently high - ranging from 75-95% (Umbreit, Vos & Coates, 2006).

Compliance

One study found that 80-90% of contracts were reported as completed. Another meta-analysis found that offenders participating in mediation and group conferencing had substantially higher completion rates than offenders processed in other ways (Latimer, Dowden & Muise, 2001; Umbreit, Vos & Coates, 2006).

Re-offending

The RJC has reported on 41 studies where RJ has been proven to reduce re-offending. One meta-analysis looked at 14 studies with over 9,000 juveniles and indicated that participation in Victim-Offender Mediation had led to 26% reduction in re-offending. When the VOM youth did re-offend, they often committed less serious offences (Nugent, Williams & Umbreit, 2003; RJC, 2006).

For more information on Restorative Justice including principles, best practice guidance, frequently asked questions, and to find out how you can get involved visit our website:

www.restorativejustice.org.uk



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What is Restorative Justice?

Restorative Justice works to resolve conflict and repair harm. It encourages those who have caused harm to acknowledge the impact of what they have done and gives them an opportunity to make reparation. It offers those who have suffered harm the opportunity to have their harm or loss acknowledged and amends made.

Conflict between people is inevitable, but when it occurs, restorative justice can help to restore the balance in a just and fair way. In resolving the harm done it works to prevent it happening again.

In a Criminal Justice setting:

- The offender is seen as having committed an offence against the state
- Victims have very limited opportunity to say how they have been affected by an incident
- The system keeps victims and offenders apart & others speak for them
- The offender is not encouraged to accept responsibility

In a Restorative setting, however:

- The harm done by a crime is an offence against the person or community
- Victims are allowed the opportunity to participate
- Victims & others may be brought together with an impartial mediator to consider what happened and find out what can be done to help put it right
- Responsibility and (re)integration are encouraged

Restorative Justice can work in a variety of settings...

In the Criminal Justice System...

An independent, trained facilitator enables the parties involved in the crime - victim(s), offender(s) and sometimes members of the community - to communicate with each other in order to **repair any harm** that has been caused.

There are a number of different models for this process, the more common ones are:

- **Victim/Offender Mediation (direct or indirect)**
- **Family Group Conferencing/Meetings**
- **Restorative Conferencing**

It can provide victims with:

- An opportunity to explain the impact of the crime
- An acknowledgement of the harm caused
- A chance to ask questions. Some control & choice
- Peace of mind about the future
- Sometimes an apology/reparation/ recompense is agreed

It can provide offenders with:

- The opportunity to explain what happened
- The opportunity to try to put right any harm caused
- Some self-esteem
- Re-integration into the community

In Schools...

- Breaking school rules is often seen as an offence against the school not the person
- Pupils involved in disputes are usually not required to accept responsibility for their behaviour
- Punishments don't provide a way forward in resolving disputes

However, Restorative Justice in schools:

- Accepts conflict as part of life
- Allows young people to take responsibility for their feelings & behaviour
- Empowers young people, teachers & parents to handle conflict in positive ways
- Reduces school exclusions
- Improves feelings of safety for staff and students

There are a number of different models for this process, the more common ones are:

- A 'Whole School' approach including conferencing and mediation -- teachers, governors, staff & pupils all take part and work to provide teacher and pupil satisfaction, improved communication and co-operation & often increased academic progress
- Peer mediation for pupils & teachers
- 'Circletime'

Some other contexts where Restorative Practices are receiving interest include the workplace, social housing and the health sector

In Prisons...

- Prisoners are often not required to face up to the effect their crime has had on others
- Breaking rules is punished but prisoners are not required to take responsibility for their actions
- Staff & prisoner disputes often leave conflict unresolved and tensions simmering

However, Restorative Justice in prisons:

- Encourages the use of victim awareness & restorative justice measures such as victim-offender mediation and conferences to be used in prisons
- Allows prisoners to take full responsibility for their behaviour & provides opportunities for improving self-esteem
- Can help to motivate changes in future behaviours
- Uses restorative processes as a way of resolving complaints and restoring calm
- Encourages good internal relationships in prisons therefore enabling the prison to function as a healthy, active & participative community in itself
- Provides the opportunity for communities outside of prison walls to help in the rehabilitation of offenders
- Offers victims the chance to have questions answered prior to a prisoners release

Every person harmed by conflict should have the opportunity to resolve it through a restorative process