

RE:STORE

JUSTICE

Presenters

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What is Restorative Justice?

Howard Zehr definition:

- Who has been harmed?
- What are their needs?
- Whose obligations are these?

**Restorative
Justice
vs.
Retributive
Justice**

This is in contrast to **Retributive Justice** that views crime as a violation of the law, and the state is the victim.

It asks these questions:

1. What laws have been broken?
2. Who did it?
3. What do the offender(s) deserve?

Why Restorative Justice?

Restorative Justice can meet needs of survivors that are outside of the capacity of the criminal justice system.

- Information
- Impact
- Remorse
- Acknowledgement of harm/accountability
- Voice
- Healing
- Safety
- Empowerment
- Forgiveness of self and other
- Reparation
- Prevention of future harm

VOD is not an option for many victims and offenders. The reasons may include:

- Offender lacks capacity or interest in participating
- No offender was identified/arrested/convicted
- Offender is deceased
- Offender wants to engage in VOD, but survivor has not initiated contact
- Victim is unknown or deceased
- Victim does not want to engage directly with the individual offender
- Parties are engaging in VOD, but delayed or want to engage in other practices as well

What We Do

- Our approach is to meet each survivor wherever they are in their healing, acknowledging that healing is an ongoing process without a fixed end point.
- Our program is invitational and multi-faceted, with the understanding that not all survivors are ready or interested in connecting directly with people responsible for committing crimes and creating harm. We encourage survivors to participate as much or as little as is comfortable for them.

Alternative Restorative Justice practices

- Restorative Justice/Victim Awareness classes with survivor testimony
- Prison-based and Community-based Restorative Justice Symposia
- In-prison Days of Healing

Restorative Justice/Victim Awareness classes with survivor testimony

Key elements of curriculum

- Circle process
- Ripple effect
- Emotional intelligence, communication, childhood narrative, trauma and regulation
- Victim testimony
- Accountability, apology, self compassion
- Reparation, commitments, prevention of future harm
- Next steps
- Celebration with community

Prison-based Restorative Justice Symposia

- Purpose
- Who attends
- Structure and Preparation
- Impact
- Stories

Purpose

Re:store Justice holds quarterly Transformative Justice Symposia to move our system beyond one of adversaries. We work with prosecutors, incarcerated people, and survivors of crime to shift the focus of the criminal justice system to one of true public safety. We believe that people who have been directly impacted by violence are essential to the creation of effective and meaningful criminal justice reform and violence prevention.

Who attends

- Survivors
- People who have created harm
- “Enlightened witnesses”- Community members including:
 - District Attorneys
 - Office of Victim Services
 - Legislators

Structure and Preparation

We work with survivors of crime and incarcerated people for three months leading up to the meeting to prepare them for what to expect for the two day event.

Day One focuses on the survivors and incarcerated people sharing their stories

Day Two The second day will be focused on policy and your responses to what you learned on the first day.

Impact

“Four years ago, I delivered the news to my daughters, then 6 and 8 years old, that their father was murdered. This past year I participated in a Victim Offender Dialogue with the person responsible for the death of my daughters’ father. It is underestimated how hard it is to forgive someone who hasn’t apologized, and because of this process, I don’t have to do that, and neither will my girls. In many ways, it has set us free. The justice system pits survivors and offenders against each other, breeding anger, fear, and hate, but how can we learn from each other and understand each other if we are afraid of each other?”

JN, Survivor Family Member and Victim Offender Dialogue participant

In-prison Days of Healing

- Purpose
- Who attends
- Structure
- Impact
- Stories - impact examples

Purpose

Address the needs of all victims for healing.

Work to stop the cycle of violence and prevent future harm to families and communities.

Who Attends?

Survivors from the community whose loved ones were victims of homicide.

Currently incarcerated people who are survivors and are enrolled in restorative justice and other accountability-focused classes.

Structure

One day in-prison group for survivors from the community and incarcerated people.

Day includes wellness practices, sharing of stories, art, self-compassion, sharing a meal.

Impact

Day of honoring loved ones.

Gives survivors and incarcerated people a chance to share who their loved one was with others who understand the experience of losing a loved one to violence.

Stories

Kay - two sons murdered five months apart.

Donald - brother murdered, also a victim of gun violence.

Implementation

Strategies for initiating alternative RJ processes and partnering with community-based organizations and in-prison programs.

- Identify self-help and inmate run programs that may want to partner with you

- Ensure that work with victims is ongoing, doesn't "service" incarcerated people

- Identify restorative justice partners in the community, especially those that can bridge divide between “victim advocates” and “inmate advocates.”

- Connect up with VOD program facilitators as possible partners