



PSN RESTORATIVE JUSTICE RESOURCE KIT



MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY School of Criminal Justice

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INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the Project Safe Neighborhoods Training and Technical Assistance (PSN TTA) Restorative Justice Resource Kit. The PSN TTA team has gathered a variety of resources for those who are looking to expand their knowledge of restorative justice and the resources that can assist in implementing restorative justice principles or practices in their work and communities. Whether you are a criminal justice practitioner seeking to deepen your knowledge, a community member interested in learning about bringing programs to your neighborhood, or simply someone who is interested in exploring alternative approaches to justice, this toolkit is for you. Although this is not an exhaustive list, these resources can serve as a starting point for individuals and organizations in learning more about restorative justice.

WHAT IS RESTORATIVE JUSTICE?

Restorative justice can be defined in different ways. Generally, it refers to a nontraditional and holistic approach to addressing the effects of crimes and harmful acts on all affected parties, originating from the practices of Indigenous communities across the world. Restorative justice seeks to hold the offending party accountable while simultaneously addressing ways to repair the harm done. Restorative justice practices actively engage victims and survivors as well as other community stakeholders in addressing the effects of crimes and harms. Restorative justice practices are used in various settings and can be implemented at multiple stages in schools, communities, and the criminal and juvenile justice systems, as illustrated in the figure below.

One example of a restorative justice practice is victim-harm doer mediation in which both parties engage in a facilitated dialogue to discuss the effects of the incident, express their feelings, and identify steps to make amends. Another practice is community conferencing, which involves the victim and harm doer along with their family members, friends, and community representatives, creating a collective process to address the harm and find mutually acceptable solutions. These are just two examples that illustrate how restorative justice can be a versatile approach to resolving conflicts and building stronger, more supportive communities.

CONTINUUM OF RESTORATIVE JUSTICE APPROACHES



Adapted from the Center for Restorative Justice (CRJ), <https://www.bcrj.org/continuum-of-services/>.

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RESTORATIVE JUSTICE PROGRAMS AND MODELS

- The Ahimsa Collective**

The Ahimsa Collective works to address harm in ways that foster wholeness for everyone. Their goal is to replace systems of punishment with paradigms grounded in healing, relationship, and love. To get there, they engage with deep trauma healing and restorative approaches while being grounded in anti-oppression. They work in deep community with people who have committed an act of violence, survivors of violence, and families affected by harm. In all of their work, they center agency, liberation, dignity, and transformation. Their work intersects with restorative justice, transformative justice, healing justice, and movements for ending sexual violence.
- Common Justice**

Common Justice develops and advances solutions to violence that transform the lives of those harmed and foster racial equity without relying on incarceration. In New York City, Common Justice operates the first alternative-to-incarceration and victim-service program in the United States that focuses on violent felonies in the adult courts. Locally and nationally, they leverage the lessons from their direct service to transform the justice system through partnerships, advocacy, as well as through elevating the experience and power of those most affected.
- Communities for Restorative Justice (C4RJ)**

C4RJ is a growing nonprofit that partners with 28 cities and towns, their police departments, and the offices of the Middlesex County, Suffolk County, and Northwestern District Attorneys to rebuild trust and offer a path forward in the wake of crime. They listen to victims, hold responsible parties accountable, and restore trust in communities.
- The DC Attorney General's Office Restorative Justice Program**

In 2017, the Office of the Attorney General (OAG) for the District of Columbia launched the Restorative Justice Program, the first of its kind in the nation. The program offers victims an opportunity to pursue an alternative path to address crime, involving a restorative justice dialogue facilitated by a trained professional. The restorative justice process can help victims of crime find closure and healing and help young people involved in crime learn from their mistakes and be held

accountable. OAG's Restorative Justice Program embodies a commitment to giving victims of crime voice and agency while treating all parties, including those who cause harm, with dignity.

- **District of Massachusetts Restorative Justice (RJ) Program**

The RJ Program was created in 2015 as a component of the District of Massachusetts' Repair, Invest, Succeed, Emerge (RISE) program to incorporate restorative practices into court programming. It began as one component of the RISE program and has expanded to offer participation to persons under pretrial and post-conviction supervision. The RJ Program provides a robust, yet manageable, experience that evokes a deeper understanding of all crime as harm; encourages meaningful acceptance of responsibility; emphasizes the connection between one's actions and their harms on others; and provides victims, survivors, and community members opportunities to engage in the justice system in effective ways. The objective is to provide a restorative lens through which past, current, and future behavior can be processed to prevent future harms. The RJ Program was developed in a manner that honors the principles of restorative justice, while meeting the needs of the court. It can be delivered as a stand-alone program or fit into and complement problem-solving or high-support programming.

- **Impact Justice**

Impact Justice advances safety, justice, and opportunity through boundary-breaking work that honors and empowers people and is changing expectations about what we can accomplish together.

- **National Restorative Coaching Program (NRCP)**

The National Center on Restorative Justice's (NCORJ's) NRCP provides restorative justice practitioners with individualized support in restorative skills, frameworks, and programmatic implementation. Restorative justice leaders conduct one-on-one coaching based on their depth of experience gleaned from restorative justice contexts. Their coaching aims to broaden and intensify the confidence and capabilities of practitioners across the nation.

- **The National District Attorneys Association's (NDAA's) Prosecutor-Led Diversion Map**

The Prosecutor-Led Diversion Map is a joint project of the NDAA and Urban Institute. This map provides an interactive list of prosecutor-led diversion programs across the country and also depicts the location of restorative justice programs.

- **Office of Justice Programs Restorative Justice-Rated Programs and Practices**

This page links to programs and practices related to restorative justice.

- **Restorative Justice for Oakland Youth (RJOY)**

RJOY interrupts cycles of violence and incarceration by promoting restorative justice practices and policies in schools, communities, and the juvenile justice system. Since 2005, RJOY has been a national thought leader, pioneering race-conscious restorative justice. Although during the

first 40 years of its existence the restorative justice movement had no significant racial justice consciousness, today, this has dramatically changed, largely because of RJOY's national leadership.

- **Restorative Justice Program Map and Directory**
The National Association of Community and Restorative Justice (NACRJ), in collaboration with the NCORJ, hosts this map of organizations, education institutions, and other entities across the United States that offer restorative justice services and resources.
- **Transformational Prison Project (TPP)**
TPP provides spaces in which those who have been harmed and those who have done the harming can come together and engage in dialogue—in order to build understanding and empathy toward those who have been victims of violent crime. TPP is committed to understanding individual harms and the systemic harms that affect communities, more specifically communities of color.

EMPIRICAL DATA AND RESEARCH

- **NCORJ Annotated Bibliography**
This resource includes an annotated bibliography of empirical studies on restorative justice in the context of the US criminal legal system, published in English in the years 2000–2023. Empirical studies include direct observations or measurement of restorative justice practices and programs. This list includes peer-reviewed sources, such as scholarly research publications and non-peer-reviewed or grey literature sources such as program evaluations, agency reports, and summaries from grant-funded restorative justice activities.
- **Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) Restorative Justice for Juveniles Literature Review**
This literature review focuses on the use of restorative justice for juveniles, including the theoretical framework, target populations, goals and various models of restorative justice programs, and outcome evidence of the effectiveness of juvenile restorative justice programs.

PUBLICATIONS

- Center for Court Innovation, "Understanding Restorative Justice," Courtinnovation.Org, n.d., https://www.innovatingjustice.org/sites/default/files/media/document/2021/CCI_Factsheet_RJ_ataglance_01142021.pdf.
- Northeastern University Media Innovation Studio, "Can Restorative Justice Break the Cycle of Mass Incarceration?," Emancipator, May 8, 2024, <https://theemancipator.org/2023/09/19/criminal-legal-system/can-restorative-justice-break-cycle-mass-incarceration/>.
- Gerry Johnstone, *A Restorative Justice Reader* (Routledge Taylor & Group, 2013).
- Howard Zehr, *The Little Book of Restorative Justice: Revised and Updated* (Good Books, 2015).

- Howard Zehr, *Changing Lenses: Restorative Justice for Our Times* (Herlad Press, 2015).
- Marilyn Armour and Mark S. Umbreit, *Violence, Restorative Justice and Forgiveness: Dyadic Forgiveness and Energy Shifts in Restorative Justice Dialogue*, 2018.
- National Institute of Corrections, *Post-Conviction Victim Service Providers: Selected Resources*, US Department of Justice (Office of Justice Programs), July 2014, <https://www.ojp.gov/ncjrs/virtual-library/abstracts/post-conviction-victim-service-providers-selected-resources>.
- Danielle Sered, *Until We Reckon: Violence, Mass Incarceration, and a Road to Repair* (The New Press, 2019).
- Barb Toews, *The Little Book of Restorative Justice for People in Prison: Rebuilding the Web of Relationships*, Good Books, 2006.
- Ted Wachtel, *Defining Restorative*, International Institute for Restorative Practices, 2013, <https://www.iirp.edu/images/pdf/Defining-Restorative.pdf>.

PODCASTS

- *The Restorative Lens*
NCORJ's podcast series, *The Restorative Lens*, explores the principles, practices, and effects of restorative justice. It features interviews with experts, practitioners, and individuals who have experienced restorative justice processes firsthand. The series delves into topics such as community healing, the role of restorative justice in the criminal justice system, and innovative approaches to conflict resolution.

WEBINARS, VIDEOS, AND DOCUMENTARIES

- *Circle Up*
Circle Up tells the powerful story of a group of Boston mothers who seek justice for their sons' murders. For these women, justice is not about revenge or mass incarceration but about healing, accountability, and community peace. This documentary speaks to the practice and power of restorative justice. After the brutal slaying of her teenage son, a Dorchester mother, Janet Connors, reached out to her son's killer to offer a chance for forgiveness. She lobbied the Department of Corrections for a year to become the first person in Massachusetts to hold a victim-offender dialogue. The film opens a rare window into the reconciliation between a murderer and the survivor of his victim. This story is unique in that the perpetrator now works with Janet and other mothers to help prevent further violence.
- *Healing in Community: The Power of Restorative Justice Diversion*
This video highlights the work and perspectives of several restorative justice diversion programs in Equal Justice USA's (EJUSA's) National Restorative Justice Diversion Collaborative. EJUSA

extends deep gratitude to every person who took time to share their experience to help tell the story of the powerful influence of restorative justice diversion.

- **NCORJ Live Webinar Schedule**

The NCORJ regularly provides free webinars on critical topics to increase public access to restorative justice education. The 2024 webinar series, Restorative Justice: A Regional Lens, highlights restorative justice work in different geographic regions across the United States.

- **"Picking Cotton": A Discussion of Justice and Redemption**

Jennifer Thompson-Cannino and Ronald Cotton's "Picking Cotton: Our memoir of injustice and redemption" details Thompson-Cannino's mistaken identification of Cotton as her rapist, his subsequent imprisonment and release, and their unlikely friendship. The pair received the 2008 Soros Justice Media Fellowship for "Picking Cotton". Jennifer Thompson is also a pioneer of restorative justice in wrongful conviction cases. John Grisham, best-selling novelist and author of "The Innocent Man," introduces them. This Forum was co-hosted with the Virginia Institutionalized Persons Project of the Legal Aid Justice Center.

- **Sorry I Shot You: Story of a Changed Man (Restorative Justice Documentary)**

Dean Stanbury (aka Stana) was a bad-boy gangster and grime rapper growing up in East London. Then one fateful day in 2006, he shot and wounded a police officer. Dean was running away and fired over his shoulder. He did eight years in jail, coming out a changed man. He now wants to track down the officer he shot to express his remorse and regret, check if he is OK, and apologize to him face to face for what he did. Will Dean be able to find him after all these years? What will the policeman say, and how will he react? In the process, Dean revisits his past to work out how he became the man capable of pulling the trigger that day.

- **Webinar Series: Restorative Justice in the Criminal Legal System**

As a part of its mission to increase public access to restorative justice education, the NCORJ regularly provides free webinars on various critical topics in restorative justice. The current webinar series, Restorative Justice in the Criminal Legal System, invites legal scholars, restorative justice practitioners, and system actors to discuss restorative justice applications in different criminal legal contexts.

- **"What is Restorative Justice?" Video Gallery**

The NCORJ's collection of videos from the restorative justice community answers the question, "What is restorative justice?"

ORGANIZATIONS

The following organizations are leading restorative justice efforts across the country and can serve as helpful resources to learn more.

- **Center for Justice Innovation**
At the center, restorative practices are used in various settings, including in the courts, (to divert criminal cases from the legal system), in schools (to build a positive culture and reduce incidents of harm), and in communities (to strengthen relationships, make decisions, or respond to harm).
- **Healing Justice**
Healing Justice is a national nonprofit organization that uses restorative justice and justice reform to provide healing to individuals and families harmed by wrongful convictions and to prevent future harm. Healing Justice seeks to heal the lives of crime victims and survivors, those who have been exonerated, both sets of families, and many others. They also work to transform the criminal legal system that serves those who have been affected.
- **JUST Alternatives**
JUST Alternatives is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit committed to supporting victims and survivors of violence and violation and to advancing promising victim-centered and offender-accountability oriented practices in justice and corrections. JUST Alternative's mission is to identify and support effective victim impact- and trauma-informed approaches to reducing violence and victimization by illuminating crime victims' needs, including the need for personal accountability and acknowledgment from offenders.
- **National Association of Community and Restorative Justice (NACRJ)**
NACRJ advances community and restorative justice as a social movement by serving people and organizations that are committed to building community and addressing harm. NACRJ provides guidance and support to establish high-quality practices with fidelity to restorative principles.
- **National Association of Victim Assistance in Corrections**
The National Association of Victim Assistance in Corrections provides an enthusiastic voice for corrections-based and other post-conviction victim services. The organization's focus is on the people who have personally experienced the effects of crime, and they promote compassion, equality, service and justice. The organization seeks to learn how post-conviction responses to crime can improve by addressing the concerns of victims through participation in the process, by having their voices heard, and by providing opportunities for offender rehabilitation.
- **National Center on Restorative Justice (NCORJ)**
NCORJ improves criminal justice policy and practice in the United States through supporting education, research, and training to further restorative approaches.

- **Restorative Justice Exchange**
Restorative Justice Exchange recognizes that justice should also address the root causes of crime, even to the point of transforming unjust systems and structures. If restorative justice is based on the idea that all parties are interconnected, and therefore, all parties are significantly affected by the outcomes of crime, then the underlying issues that lead to crime and the context in which it occurs must be examined and addressed.
- **The Restorative Justice Project at Equal Justice USA**
The Restorative Justice Project at EJUSA is the only national TTA project that partners with communities across the nation to address harm by using precharge restorative justice diversion programs.
- **The Zehr Institute for Restorative Justice**
The Zehr Institute for Restorative Justice, founded in fall 2012, is a program of the Center for Justice and Peacebuilding at Eastern Mennonite University. The Zehr Institute provides safe spaces for practitioners and learners to cultivate connections and have thoughtful dialogue through conferences, webinars, online courses, as well as in-person.

CONCLUSION

We encourage you to delve deeper into restorative justice as an evidence-informed practice that can improve outcomes for victims and offenders and build safer communities. By exploring restorative justice, you can discover the ways in which it can repair harm, foster accountability, and promote healing. If you are part of a US Attorney's Office, remember that TTA on restorative justice and a variety of other topics is available to you through the PSN TTA program. Other organizations may also be eligible for assistance under PSN TTA. Additional information can be found at [PSNTTA.ORG](https://psntta.org).