

Restorative Conferencing (Victim/Youth Conferencing)



Restorative Justice

- What is the nature of the harm?
- What needs to be done to repair the harm?
- Who is responsible for repairing the harm done?



Restorative Conferencing

- Provides structure and support
- Not counseling. Not mediation.
- Opportunity for real accountability

A Police Officer's Story of Restorative Justice

Benefits of Restorative Conferencing

Benefits to Person Harmed

- Has a **VOICE** and a **CHOICE** in the process
- **Acknowledgement** as a victim of a crime
- **Concerns** are acknowledged and validated
- Hears that the community is interested in **supporting** them
- Has opportunity to **share the impact** on them
- Has a **part to play in how the process unfolds**, instead of being outside
- Knows how the youth will be **held accountable**
- An emphasis is placed on their **safety and security**



Benefits for Youth

- Learn impact of their behavior on others
- Move beyond denial toward responsibility
- Chance to tell their story
- Participate in plan for restitution and repair
- Feel more in control of one's life
- Apologize

Benefits to the Broader Community

- **Community involvement** increases as they participate
- **School relationships** are strengthened
- Community members feel their **children are safer**
- Youth know the **community cares** about them
- Communities experience **less conflict** and more peace

Impact on recidivism

In California, Texas,
Oregon, and
Pennsylvania youth
recidivism has
decreased



<https://leb.fbi.gov/articles/featured-articles/restorative-justice-and-youthful-offenders>

Types of offenses

- Assaults
- Cyber Offenses & Sexting
- Damage to Property
- Threatening Language
- Bullying
- Theft





Pre-conferencing

Pre-conferencing is just as important as the conference!

When NOT to proceed with a conference:

- When there is a danger for victim to feel re- victimized
- When the time is not right for the victim
- When there are unrealistic expectations
- When all parties are not fully informed about the process
- When there is risk of harm (mental or physical)
- Imbalance of power relationship cannot be balanced in a meeting

A skilled facilitator.....

- Gathers all relevant information prior to the conference
- Notifies participants of all details
- Is neutral and supportive
- Creates structure, including guidelines and values
- Meets with all parties in advance
- Moves the discussion forward
- Recognizes when to move forward, pause, continue, and stop
- Ensures the written agreement is reflective of the conference



Sample Conference Format

- Introductions
- Values & Guidelines
- Talking Piece or Centerpiece (if applicable)
- Opening
- Discussion & Questions
- Closing
- Agreement Write-up

Goals & Values in a Restorative Conference



- Youth Accountability
- Youth Competency Development
- Victim voice & choice
- Community safety

RESTORATIVE JUSTICE TRAININGS

FOR ORGANIZATIONS SERVING JUSTICE-INVOLVED YOUTH



<http://www.triadrj.org>

Questions?