What is Restorative Justice?

Restorative Justice is a process whereby all the parties with a stake in a particular offence come together to resolve collectively how to deal with the aftermath of the offence.

It is a different way of thinking about crime and conflict.

Restorative Justice focuses on holding the offender accountable in a more meaningful way. It repairs the harm caused by the offence, helps to reintegrate the offender into the community and helps to achieve a sense of healing for both the victim and the community.

Restorative Justice involves three main parties:

1- VICTIM, or the individuals harmed
2- OFFENDER, or the individual causing the harm
3- COMMUNITY, the place where the harm was committed.

Restorative Justice Conferences and Circles are some of the tools used in Restorative Justice. A victim may meet with the offender face to face in a Victim/Offender Conference, or with the Offender and persons from the larger community in a Family Group/Community Conference.

A Healing and Talking Circle can also be held to focus on a common concern in order to aid in healing.

A Sentencing Circle can also be used to arrive at a sentencing plan for an offender.
What are the benefits for the victim?

Restorative Justice will provide you with the opportunity to:
- Express your feelings and ask questions
- Have your feelings, concerns and suffering acknowledged
- Reach some understanding of the offender's motivation for committing the offence
- Say how the harm done by the offender might be repaired

Key values of Restorative Justice

Victim

- Restorative Justice will provide you with the opportunity to:
  - Express your feelings and ask questions
  - Have your feelings, concerns and suffering acknowledged
  - Reach some understanding of the offender's motivation for committing the offence
  - Say how the harm done by the offender might be repaired

Offender

- Crime hurts victims, communities and offenders. It creates an obligation to make amends. Restorative
  Justice gives offenders the opportunity to:
  - Take responsibility for actions in a safe environment
  - Be an active participant in determining how you may begin to repair the harm done
  - Hear first hand how your behaviour has affected people and the community
  - Reduces reoffending and assists in the rehabilitative process
  - Makes reintegration with the community easier.

Community

- Crime affects everyone. The entire community can work together to repair harm done and create safe communities. Restorative Justice gives the community a chance to:
  - Take responsibility for, and actively participate in, achieving justice in your community
  - Focus on the causes of crime and do something about them
  - Support the victim and ensure there are opportunities in the community for the offender to make amends
  - Reduce crime and violence in schools
  - Prevent problems from escalating in the community
  - Help repair relationships and bring closure to incidents of conflict


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Justice that Heals!