



For information on how to obtain other materials on Restorative Justice, please visit our website www.ccjc.ca/restorative_justice.html

This resource was prepared by the Church Council on Justice and Corrections (CCJC) and representatives from supporting denominations in collaboration with the Correctional Service of Canada.



Please take a moment to provide us feedback on materials we prepared for RJ Week by completing a quick survey available on our website:

www.ccjc.ca/restorative_justice.html

Communities Responding to Human Needs



Correctional Service
Canada

Service correctionnel
Canada

Canada

RESTORATIVE JUSTICE:
WHAT IS IT?

Restorative Justice What Is It?

Restorative justice has been described by many people and communities. The Department of Justice Canada defines restorative justice in the following way:

“Restorative Justice is a way of viewing justice that puts the emphasis on repairing harm caused by conflict and crime. In this approach crime is understood as a violation of people and relationships and a disruption of the peace of the community. It is not simply an offence against the state. Restorative Justice is collaborative and inclusive. It involves the participation of victims, offender and community affected by the crime in finding solutions that seek to repair harm and promote harmony.”



What does it look like?

When people affected by a harmful event, both the one who is harmed and the one who caused harm, want to participate in a restorative justice process, they individually meet with a trained facilitator who helps them define their unmet needs, and identify the tools to meet those needs. Often, this involves working towards a face-to-face conversation about the harmful event, in which the concerned individuals talk about how they were affected by the harm, and decide together what needs to happen to make things as right as possible. Together they come to an agreement about how obligations created by the harm can be met, and people are supported through meeting those obligations.

Who can participate?

In Canada, restorative approaches are being used to deal with crimes of all severity, and for people of all ages. (The most serious crimes are first processed through the courts, and then if participants wish, restorative approaches can be considered.) They are used for people who cause harm for the first time, and those who have been in trouble with the law and their community in the past. People can use restorative justice approaches more than once, even if they did not successfully complete their agreements the first time.

If you live in a community where restorative justice services are available, you may want to find out what kinds of cases they work with; if your circumstances ‘fit’ with their mandate, you might be eligible for a restorative justice process rather than (or as well as) a process in the traditional legal system. You must speak with the police and / or another referring agent about your specific situation.

Who manages/funds restorative justice agencies?

In Canada, restorative justice programs are managed in a variety of ways. Most are run by a not-for-profit agency, accountable to a volunteer board of directors. Some are governed by municipalities and other regional governments. Monies to manage the programs are often raised through small grants, fundraising or multiple parties (municipalities, policing agencies, school districts, faith communities, community service organizations, etc.). Sustainability and adequate resources are often concerns of these organizations. Most are supported through the generous help of trained and competent volunteers.

