

Making Amends: A Podcast Exploring How Prisoners Try to Make Amends

Restorative Cities and the role of intermediary bodies

Discovering Restorative Justice

Restorative Justice and the revised Victims Code

RESOLUTION

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Contents

2. Introduction

3. Making Amends: A Podcast Exploring How Prisoners Try to Make Amends

5. Restorative Cities and the role of intermediary bodies

7. A victims story

9. Restorative Justice and the revised Victims Code

10. The RJC's 2nd Annual Conference: A Student Perspective

11. My Experience of Attending the 2nd Annual RJC

12. Peacemaking circles & urban youth: bringing justice home

13. Join in the discussion

14. A day in the life of....

15. Notices

Introduction



A very warm welcome to our first edition of Resolution for 2021. What a year we have all been subjected to, I am sure you are all waiting anxiously to see how everything unravels this year. My hope is that we all get to hug our loved ones soon without heading into a 4th lockdown after the summer and that we get to make up for all the missed celebrations and contact with our colleagues. My fingers and toes are firmly crossed!

The Board of Trustees have been hard at work over the last few months planning for the next conference, carving out time to develop a formal strategy for the RJC and looking for a new staff member to join our growing team. It has taken a lot of hard work to get here and I am so pleased that the RJC is moving into a new

growth phase where we can begin to actively collaborate with our members and increase our influence, both at home and abroad. On that note, I want to thank you for the patience and support you have shown us over the last few years. We would not have got here without our members rooting for the charity and providing words of encouragement. Together we truly are greater than the sum of our parts!

The importance of relationships and support is reflected in this issue of Resolution. We have four substantive contributions to share with you. The first is from Professor Steve Herbert from the University of Washington, Seattle, who shares his findings from his latest project Making Amends. What I love about this project is that it explores often under-represented voices in the field, that of offenders. Their accounts of being in prison and wanting to, but not be able to, repair the damage they have created is really powerful. We have included the link to the podcast which is free to access and I would strongly recommend listening to it.

The second article is from colleagues in Belgium and Italy who reflect on the opportunities

and challenges of seeking to increase civic community engagement in restorative justice and extending practice beyond the case out into the community. Those of you who attended the conference in November, will recall the panel on 'restorative cities' and these contributors specifically discuss their experience of attempting to establish 'intermediary bodies' to stimulate community investment in conflict resolution and prevention. Something we also grapple with here in England and Wales.

Our third contribution is from Sue Donnelly who shares her journey with restorative justice and what the process meant for her. I found this story really powerful because it offers an account of the value it holds at an individual level and the impact that can have on one's life and approach after experiencing a restorative process. I am really grateful to Sue for sharing her story with us and for the work that she does to promote RJ in her sphere of influence.

The fourth article is written by one of our new interns, Rebecca Bull, who provides us with an update on the changes to the newly published Victims Code of Practice. All of our readers will be

aware that the new Code comes into effect on the 1st April 2021 and there are new expectations in terms of the required communication and offer of RJ to victims of crime. This is an important development, but we do need to have a broader discussion about how these new requirements will be met and how best to communicate. This remains a gap in policy and our understanding of what works in practice.

I would also like to thank Julie Potts, Head of Employee Relations at Aster Group for being our interviewee for our 'day in the life of' feature, Becky Bull and Hannah Hassanali our interns for providing a review of our 2nd annual conference and Martin Wright for providing us with a book review.

I hope you enjoy this edition as much as I did. If you wish to contribute a summary of research, a case study, an overview of practice or just provide feedback on the edition, we would love to hear from you. So please do get in touch.

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From the field:

Making Amends: A Podcast Exploring How Prisoners Try to Make Amends



Steve Herbert is Mark Torrance Professor of Law, Societies, and Justice at the University of Washington, Seattle. His latest project, *Making Amends*, is an 8-part podcast series that explores how prisoners reckon with their pasts and search for a way to atone. Men at the Oregon State Penitentiary grapple with how to understand the wrongs they committed, and how they can repair the damage they created.

I began teaching inside prisons in 2013. As I did so, I became aware of the significant amount of personal change many prisoners undertake. This is even true for individuals who have been sentenced to extraordinarily long prison terms, which are common in the United States. I wanted such stories to be more widely heard, which motivated my writing a book on life-sentenced prisoners (*Too Easy to Keep: Life-Sentenced Prisoners and the Future of Mass Incarceration*) and then to produce a podcast, *Making Amends*.

I was fortunate to gain access to the Oregon State Penitentiary to record conversations with prisoners about how they try to atone for their mistakes.



There, I met a group of remarkable men, who are working hard to make amends, despite the difficult challenges posed by incarceration.

Prisoners struggle with how they can make amends

When Anthony entered a courtroom to receive his 25-year-to-life sentence for a murder he committed at the age of 15, he saw members of his victim's family. One was a large, muscular man. Anthony feared that he was about to be assaulted.

That is not what happened.

The man who scared Anthony was both the victim's uncle and a former prison correctional officer. When the uncle was invited by the judge to speak, he turned to Anthony. He said that the family both forgave Anthony and deplored the length of the sentence. He also told Anthony that prison life was going to be hard, but that redemption was still a possibility.

Anthony was one of the men at the Oregon State Penitentiary that I got to know for my 8-part podcast series, *Making Amends*. I asked him about that moment:

Herbert: How did you understand their decision to forgive you?

Anthony: I didn't at all then.

Herbert: It made no sense

Anthony: No, I went in there and my first reaction, I seen him, big buff dude and I'm like, 'He's gonna hit me.' And then when he was talking, it was confusing. I didn't understand it. I didn't understand it until maybe 12 years later. It started to resonate, and it started to make me feel like, well, if they can do that, then what is my response? Ultimately, what is my response to their mercy. Because that's what it was.

Anthony is hardly the only incarcerated person who struggles with how to respond to his past crimes. For my podcast, I taught and audio-recorded a weekly class on the process of how we can atone for wrongs we commit. In the class, we explored the

nature of wrongs, the emotions that emerge when wrongs occur -- on the part of both the perpetrator and the victim -- and how we can repair the damage our wrongs create. I also recorded multiple interviews with each participant so that I could understand their individual stories in greater depth.

These two-hour classes were vibrant and substantive, and the interviews were graced by notable vulnerability.

The men were very interested in trying to make the proper moral sense of their mistakes, and eager to discuss how they can best repair the damage they created.

They were remarkably self-reflective.

Theron, for example, received a life without parole sentence for a senseless murder that he committed at the age of 18.

This was the outgrowth of a career of violence, one that earned him the nickname, Pit Bull. Those violent tendencies continued when he went to prison. But he eventually grew tired of that, and started to understand himself better:

And I always joke, like, you know, you got Pit Bull, and that's the street, that's the

person that I've become through the means of violence. And this Pit Bull has somehow suppressed Theron. So Theron has not been able to surface because he always have to embody Pit Bull, and because this is what people expect in this environment. My reputation is what I've done, but my character is who I am.

So, I think – I'm Theron. And I'm learning that Theron is actually a very compassionate person. And there was Cameron, whose heroin addiction led to a string of robberies. Once incarcerated, he joined a violent crew. He was led away from that lifestyle through reading moral philosophy, which challenged him to question his approach to prison life:

There's the moral question of – say someone calls you out to fight. Now if you say no to that fight because you're terrified, then you could say that that's cowardice. But then there's the other aspect of – what if you got a visit coming up, what if you got good time that you ain't going to be there with your kids? There's all these other circumstances where fighting is not the right thing to do. But basing people's character on their willingness to commit violence, when I really sat down and thought about it, I thought: that's the stupidest thing I've ever heard.

And all of them spoke of the need to never forget their victims. They recognised the obligations they possessed because of their wrongdoing.

So, there came a moment for these men when they confronted pasts. This was not easy. As Steve said, 'Yeah, nobody wants to look in the mirror and say, that's a bad guy right there.' Or, as Cameron put it, 'I feel like I'm a good person, but I did all these bad things. And trying to meld the two is a hard thing to go through.'

This process, if painful, can yield notable benefits. Like Theron, the men uncovered a compassion that the masculinist culture of prison had previously suppressed. Terrence became an active mentor for those younger inmates who needed to be more self-reflective. Moustafa began tutoring in the education wing. Steve recruited people to join him in the metal shop and the photography studio. All of them saw helping others as a key means by which they could atone.

Moustafa used the metaphor of a spider web to characterise the consequences of his actions:

The community can be portrayed as something like a spider web. And each connection between the members of the community constitutes a strand in that web. So when you hurt a person, you break that connection. And you have to re-connect, so to speak. So when you violate a trust, when you violate a person, when you violate a moral code, you are thereby obligated to make right. And if you're really in touch with your humanity, that's the conclusion that you're going to reach – that what you did was wrong and you have to make right to the most degree possible.

These men would like their victims to know of their repentance. They would like to

speak to their victim's families, if that was something those families desired, even if it means dealing with some difficult emotions. Terrence said, 'I would love to get a chance to sit down with my victim's mom and dad. I'm assuming that they have a bunch of questions for me, some anger for me and whatever else they might be feeling. Just to give him the opportunity.'

But such opportunities are rare. Perpetrators of crime, particularly violent crimes, are usually prohibited from any contact with their victims. And so deeper reconciliation between wrongdoers and victims can rarely occur.

Such reconciliation may not be well-advised in many cases, because many victims will not wish to pursue it. However, if individuals are working hard to atone, and are turning their remorse into acts of repentance, then perhaps they deserve greater recognition for that work.

As you might expect, Anthony is disappointed that he cannot inform his victim's family that their words at his sentencing still resonate with him. He would like, if nothing else, to extend his gratitude:

Yeah, I took something from them that can never be given back. But obviously they healed on their own and were able to express what they expressed to me in the courtroom. Later on, when I was able to reflect upon that, it helped me heal.

Podcasts are a powerful medium through which to tell stories like these, ones that are too rarely heard. Podcasts can also provoke listeners to reflect on the true meaning of

justice, and perhaps to motivate them to engage in conversations about criminal justice reform. For that reason, I am planning future seasons to try to continue to stimulate such conversations.

Making Amends is available for download on I-Tunes, Spotify, and wherever else podcasts are found. You can learn more here:

www.makingamendspodcast.com

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From the field:

Restorative Cities and the role of intermediary bodies



All three authors are involved in the activities of the Working Group on Restorative Cities of the European Forum for Restorative Justice. This Working Group started in 2019 and currently represents eight restorative cities from five different countries in Europe. There are regular (at least monthly) (online) exchanges on the concept, practices, development and research with regard to restorative cities.

Ideas and initiatives to build restorative cities emerged some 15 years ago. It was argued that ‘restorative justice is much more than encounter programmes; it is a philosophy or theory of justice that could be applied to every aspect of a society’s response to crime and conflict’ (Van Ness, 2006: 1). Against the background of that thinking, international findings of restorative justice being applied only in a very limited way were disappointing. A general consensus was that restorative justice programmes and policies were lacking broad societal support to make the new movement really mainstream (Pali and Pelikan, 2010). The restricted field of application not only referred to the relatively low number and selectivity of cases in most countries, but also to the limited reach of the – in theory strongly defended – third party in restorative justice, namely the ‘community’.

While the ‘community of care’ is generally involved in different types of conferencing programmes, the wider community (or what is known as the ‘community of interest’) is not. Also in a European context it remains a challenge how to address and include representatives of the wider community. In other words: how do we activate people as ‘citizens’ when crime or conflict appears in their environment without necessarily affecting them personally? Two significant projects contained this as a recommendation in their final reports. First, the peacemaking

circles pilot project within three European countries stressed the need to further develop strategies on how to involve citizens themselves more directly (Weitekamp, 2015). Second, a project on restorative justice in intercultural settings found that often a preparatory phase has to be passed through to gradually create support in local communities, for example through the creation of support groups of citizens (Vanfraechem and Aertsen, 2018).

How to reach and involve local communities at large is a recurrent theme also in the Working Group on Restorative Cities, which was created within the European Forum for Restorative Justice in 2019¹. In what follows, we present the set-up and some findings in working with ‘intermediary bodies’ to activate local communities, as experimented in the province and cities of Como and Lecco in Italy.

Lecco and Como intermediary bodies: The context

Lecco (48,058 inhabitants) and Como (85,543 inhabitants) towns are located on the opposite branches of Lake Como. Once rich industrial towns, they have undergone a deep restructuring of the economic fabric, having a service-based economy nowadays. While Lecco is famous for the Lecco



‘spiders’, climbing mountains everywhere, and for being the set of the novel ‘Ipromessi sposi’² by Alessandro Manzoni, Como is a well-known tourist destination for its villas and lake landscape. Both towns rely on a rich but fragmented civil society. The role of the municipality in building the territorial governance reflects a first difference between Lecco and Como. While the municipality of Lecco has taken an active role in linking civil society organisations amongst them and between them and the municipality, the municipality of Como has played a more modest role in this regard. The political orientation of the local government forms another difference between the two towns. Lecco has been governed by the left party since 2010, while Como turned to the right party in 2017, after a short left government between 2012 and 2017. Furthermore, while the municipality of Lecco has supported the promotion of a community restorative approach to conflict management, the municipality of Como has adopted a rather punitive policy approach to it. Within this regional context, two ‘intermediary bodies’ (Ardigò, 1980) were created: The Unnamed – Lecco Group of Restorative Justice, in 2012; the Intermediary body of Como (Rebbio), designed in 2016 and implemented in 2017.

Lecco and Como intermediary bodies: United in differences

The differences in the 'social ecology' of the two initiatives resulted in dissimilarities in vision, action level and composition of the two bodies. The political support for restorative justice and governance strengthening work of the municipality of Lecco favoured the creation of The Unnamed as an intermediary body with a strategic focus, i.e. definition, implementation and diffusion of restorative oriented strategies and actions in the entire province of Lecco.



Conversely, in Como, the limited municipal support and the fragmented territorial governance

triggered the creation of the Intermediary body at neighbourhood level (i.e. Rebbio) with a

focus on diffusing and applying the community restorative approach to solving social conflicts in the neighbourhood. The size and composition of the two bodies is also different: since 2012, The Unnamed has engaged over 100 people representing public institutions (25%), civil society organisations (55%), and citizens (20%); the Como intermediary body is made up of a stable group of 10-15 citizens living and active in the neighbourhood, extending up to 30 citizens on specific occasions.

However, despite these differences, the two intermediary bodies have a series of features in common. These are:

- I. Bottom-up, volunteering and informal 'construction sites' of community, which involve citizens interested in community wellbeing and co-existence forms based more on trustworthy relations than on securitarian logics (Fassin, 2018) and oriented to the deconstruction of culprit/enemy mechanisms.
- II. Plural agora made up of citizens – 'antennas' able to intercept suffering and social tensions in the community, to propose again the common good of staying together and to construct 'threshold' experiences as areas of pause, suspension of conflicts, honest and respectful dialogue, regenerative transition of interrupted relations originated by or in conflicts (Dighera & Lizzola, 2019). These citizens deem essential not leaving people trapped in conflicts alone. They are engaged in the creation of the context and cultural conditions for the development of a restorative city/community, through a steadfast, daily, and apparently invisible community work. This requires conscious passion, trust, social esteem, flexible memberships, relational skills, and ability to intercept social needs and to act at the right moment. They are strategically aware of the need to root their activities and gather the necessary resources to strengthen social networks and skills to prevent future conflicts.
- III. Involved in various restorative oriented practices: e.g. Restorative Oriented

Groups (i.e. dialogues with citizens and victims and citizens and perpetrators, firstly separated and afterwards united); RestoCovid Circle (i.e. circles involving citizens of Lecco in facilitated dialogues on the suffering brought about by COVID-19), Restorative Corners animated by citizens in public places; restorative rereading and management of conflicts in Como - Rebbio (e.g. conflicts taking place on the neighbourhood Facebook page); awareness raising initiatives on restorative justice for and with citizens and students.

The empathic and active listening and the



relations cultivated in the meetings of the two intermediary bodies jointly with the experience of restorative practices strengthened formal and informal interpersonal relations between the members of the bodies, opened collaborations with public and/or private organisations, also in the area of social conflicts management (in the case of Lecco), generated new projects in public institutions and neighbourhood organisations, increased collective knowledge and competences on community restorative justice and restorative conflict management practices, strengthened awareness on the role and potentialities of the community engagement in justice processes, developed social esteem and

credibility, feelings of care for the collective 'us' instead of 'me', new views on and solutions to deal with deeply rooted social conflicts and reconstructed social relations interrupted by conflicts.

Lecco and Como intermediary bodies: Lesson learned on community activation

A key question for all processes aiming at community activation regards the factors that can trigger and initiate such processes. The experiences of Lecco and Como intermediary bodies shed light on social conditions and mechanisms³ that favour community mobilization even in less favourable contexts: reputation and social legitimacy of the proponent; participants' sense of belonging to the community; mutual responsibility of their members; repeated interactions between participants; learning by doing; participants' self-efficacy; performance feedback and bandwagon⁴.

¹ See also 'Notes from the Field' with six case studies of restorative cities, in *The International Journal of Restorative Justice*.

² The Unnamed, the character of this novel, inspired the name of the intermediary body of Lecco, as it testifies a 'restorative conversion' from crime.

³ Social mechanisms are causal explanations of why the context features combined with process features shape the behaviours of policy actors and trigger changes in their behaviour. They are valued for their transferability potential (Barzelay, 2007).

4] According to this mechanism, more endorsements of a certain behaviour create a stronger bandwagon pressure, which in turn prompts its higher adoption. Otherwise said, people are more prone to adopt behaviours that are followed by a large number of persons.

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A Victim's Story:

Discovering Restorative Justice

In 2013 I was catapulted into the world of Restorative Justice. It was not a world I knew anything about nor had I even heard of it. But my husband of thirty-seven years has a law degree, and back in the late seventies at Sheffield University, he had studied the concept and use of restorative justice within the confines of the judiciary system of the day.

When you suffer sudden catastrophic loss, you need time to process what is happening around you

It took a while for us to be able to pursue Restorative Justice. When you suffer sudden catastrophic loss, you need time to process what is happening around you, and to even believe that the events have taken place. And you need to wait for each other in a marriage, to grieve together, and to keep healthy channels of communication amidst all the pain; plus, there are the other members of the family to consider.

We are an ordinary family from the East Midlands, living our lives in suburban England, enjoying work, hobbies, our church life, friends, and a large, extended family. We often go to France for our holidays, with parents, brothers and their wives, cousins, and children – warm, happy weeks in the sun, with good memories. My work as a secondary school teacher has meant that holidays are very important, a time to gather the family around and relax. My husband, then working in insurance, is an easy-going, football loving northerner,

As a participant in restorative justice, I found tremendous relief in being able to bring reality to the crime, and to ask questions as well as hear responses that matched what had been said in a court of law

with a penchant for puns, clever with words and a great fondness of reading. Our children are a constant source of pleasure and delight. It is always satisfying when your children begin to teach you and have bigger adventures than you ever did!

So, what of the Restorative Justice? I could never have imagined how important this was to become in my life, nor have even wanted to have anything to do with it. But it has captured me and taken me into worlds I would not have known about – conflict resolution, prisons, police conferences, radio reports, talks to people in all walks of life. I have become an advocate for Restorative Justice, looking for opportunities to tell my story, and to encourage others to consider whether this might be a means to restore peace, to alleviate pain, to understand and to move on, in the most difficult of circumstances that can be presented to us in this life. For me, conflict can be resolved, or at least faced through the process of Restorative Justice; acute pain and damage can be understood, even when it makes no sense, if you as a victim can just have a chance to express how much you are hurting, and listen to some sort of explanation for your pain.

We were the victim's voice.

As a participant in restorative justice, I found tremendous relief in being able to bring reality to the crime, and to ask questions as well as hear responses that matched what had been said in a court of law. The experience was the most frightening one I have ever had in my life, but the outcome contributed to making me

feel that one day I would be healthy and whole again. The build up to the restorative conference was extremely well managed with plenty of preparation time and visits from our facilitator – in fact, it took just under a year. Each visit was careful, and we never felt hurried or that we were asking unnecessary questions, even though I am sure we must have covered the same ground several times. There was always a fear within me, that, even though I strongly believed this was the right path to take, somehow it would be too difficult in the end. Because of the empathetic and pastoral nature of our facilitator, who walked with such care through the process, and because of my husband's certainty that this was the right course of action for us, I was able to understand and gradually be prepared for the Restorative meeting.

For us, the power of forgiveness and hearing that someone is sorry for their actions was a major part of the process, as was the outcome agreement. We have a copy of this.

Following our experience of restorative Justice, I have been able to implement it as part of the sanctions system in the school where I was teaching, using it as a means to bring together students and teachers, and to move things on when apparently communication has broken down. I was lucky enough to receive training in the use of RJ in school from my local authority at the time, when there was money available and a push from the Police and Crime Commissioner to promote RJ across the county. I was interested to discover that Restorative Justice is taught to students as

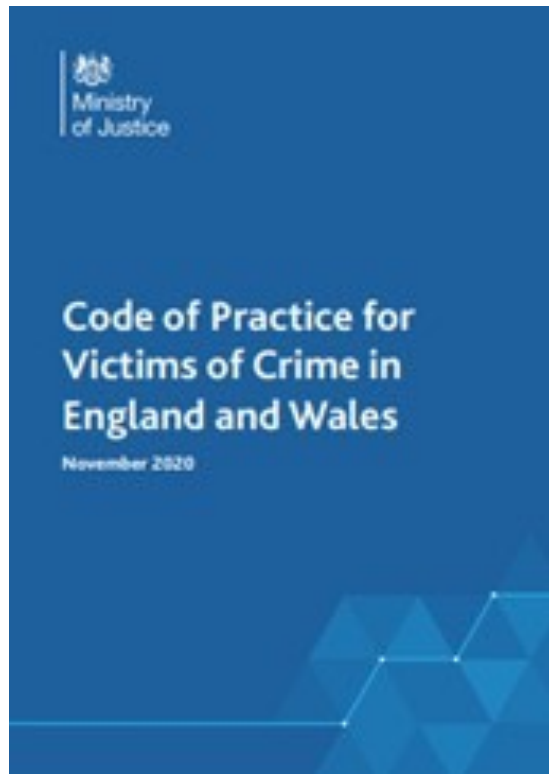
part of their Religious Studies curriculum, and therefore I became a living example to them of how it works, and whether it's effective, thus promoting it naturally, and effectively. My school was able to give me time to hold restorative meetings and supported me in training other members of staff in the use of restorative justice. Almost every time, for petty falling outs and anti-social acts, the students who chose to pursue this course of action did not reoffend, invariably apologising for their behaviour and forgiving each other. This was not a prerequisite of the meetings but seemed to be a natural result when confronted with an understanding of behavioural outcomes. In more serious situations, such as inappropriate use of social media, there was an opportunity to face up to the implications of this form of bullying, and often students had not really understood these, so the RJ helped build awareness of the power of this media.

Restorative Justice has worked in my life, and I have seen its effectiveness in the lives of many other people. It has allowed me, despite the pain and heaviness of tremendous grief which never goes away, to work towards helping others to experience that same effect and to begin to walk again with a sense of purpose and dignity.

Sue Donnelly

Restorative justice in practice:

Restorative justice and the revised Victims Code



The Government will work with criminal justice agencies and organisations providing support to victims of crime to raise awareness of victims' rights under the Code

*Lord Wolfson of Tredegar
(February 2021)*

On the 1 April 2021, the revised Victims Code, comes into force. Within the revised code, victims have a clearly defined set of rights which set out a minimum level of service that can be expected from criminal justice agencies.

It is hoped that these changes will mean victims have a greater awareness of their rights, receive information and support when then need it and have a greater level of satisfaction with the treatment they receive throughout the criminal justice system.

The revised Code specifically sets out that all victims have the right to receive information about restorative justice and, should they wish, be referred to a restorative justice service in their local area.

The RJC's review of the revised code considered two key questions:

What does the revised Code mean for the restorative justice sector?

What do we and the sector need to do to prepare?

Primarily restorative justice is reflected within rights 3 and 4 of the revised Code. These refer to the right for victims to be provided with information when reporting the crime and to be referred to services that support victims.

Right 3 | To be provided with information when reporting the crime

The revised Code states that a victim has a right to receive information about restorative justice, explaining what it entails and where to access restorative services locally. This must occur within 5 days of reporting the offence and while the police are responsible for providing this information initially, the Code states that all service providers that deal with the victim throughout the criminal justice process must consider if they would benefit from receiving information about restorative justice. Where the offender is under the age of 18, it is expected that this responsibility will fall to Youth Offending Teams.

The right to receive information from local Youth Offending Teams, where the offender is under the age of 18, may have significant benefits for the young person in relation to desistance and awareness. Whilst restorative practice is well established within the youth justice sector, this right to information will likely increase the demands on existing restorative practitioners.

Youth Offending Services may need to increase the number of restorative practitioners trained in cases of youth restorative justice and clearly define their offer to help broaden their service offer and aid more stakeholders.

This right to be provided with information has the potential to encourage more victims to participate in a restorative process

However, if this information is not received, or the content and delivery are not of high quality then it is unlikely to have a significant impact on increasing public knowledge or take-up.

The Code also explains that all services a victim encounters throughout the criminal justice process should consider providing information about restorative justice.

This could potentially result in multiple offers and discussions taking place

It is implied that collaboration between actors present in the criminal justice process and restorative practitioners/service providers is essential in maintaining good communication, practice reach, knowledge flows concerning current practice and services and stakeholder engagement.

Right 4 | To be referred to services that support victims and have services and support tailored to your needs

Under the revised Code, victims will have a right to be referred to local services for support, including restorative justice. This must occur within two working days to ensure individualised access to specific support in a timely manner.

Importantly, the Code briefly states that offenders can contact restorative services to request restorative justice. Service providers can propose this request to the victim and, if accepted, progress with the referral. This suggests practitioners should not neglect the role of the offender in the restorative process and should focus on this party without lowering the emphasis on the victim.

Service providers will also need to review and revise their referral processes to ensure that the right to referral within two working days is met.

The most significant implication is the need for access to restorative services to be broadened

This is particularly important given that not all PCC areas have restorative services available for victims.

The RJC will continue to campaign for increased access to restorative services

particularly focusing on PCC's, commissioning bodies and the MoJ.

Restorative justice is an effective intervention when carried out safely and to a high standard. The quality of the service being delivered is key – positive outcomes are reliant on good practice. Anyone carrying out restorative processes needs to have appropriate training and organisational support to protect participants and maintain the integrity of the profession. In a field which is growing rapidly, consistency of quality is paramount, and for that reason, adhering to agreed standards is essential.

The RJC has developed clear, evidence-based practice frameworks for restorative practice and put mechanisms in place to enable service providers and individual practitioners to demonstrate that they meet and maintain those standards. Our Registered Service Provider and Registered Practitioner Frameworks provide external validation that organisations and practitioners are meeting nationally recognised standards. They reassure participants in restorative processes that they will receive a safe and effective service. They also provide Commissioners with a tool to identify high quality service providers.

PCCs need to know that their money is being spent on safe and effective restorative justice delivery. Any commissioned service should, at a minimum, be working towards achieving Registered Service Provider status and maintaining that status on an annual basis. The Registered Service

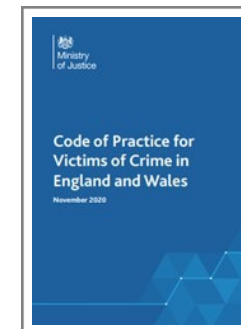
Provider framework is appropriate for any type of restorative justice provider including prisons, youth offending teams, multi-agency hubs and third sector providers.

To meet the rights of victims under the new Code, we all need to ensure that restorative justice services are available in their area, that each criminal justice agency/service provider is aware of the availability of restorative justice service/s in their area and that police officers/youth offending teams are able to record their offer of restorative justice to victims and their referral of the victim to appropriate services, including restorative justice services, within the specified time limits.

Becky Bull

Postgraduate student, University of Nottingham

Intern, RJC



[Download the Code of Practice for Victims of Crime in England and Wales](#)

The RJC's 2nd Annual Conference: A Student Perspective

I am currently a third year Sociology student at the University of Nottingham. As part of our 'Restorative Justice' module, we were invited to attend the RJC's 2nd annual conference and to present our posters that we had already submitted as an assessment. I initially felt this to be an intimidating prospect due to being inexperienced in speaking beyond my tutor-group, and not having attended a conference of this scale and calibre before. I am so pleased to report that my fears were not realised! It was one of the most memorable and insightful moments of my University experience and something I urge other students to do, given the opportunity. Taking part in the poster presentations provided me with the opportunity to engage with and gain feedback from those with extensive experience in the field. Furthermore, being able to see first-hand how the theories and concepts that I had been exploring on the module are implemented across institutions was integral to improving my understanding of RJ. There were two particular takeaways for me that I'd like to share with you.

First, I was disheartened by the statistic highlighted by Dr Mark Walters which stated that 16% of students had experienced hate crime whilst at University.

At the University of Nottingham alone, this equates to approximately 5.5 thousand students based on 2018-2019 statistics. This extended out to every University across the nation amounts to a huge proportion of young adults experiencing hate crime, something I find intolerable. As a student, I am pleased to see that restorative practices can be implemented in Higher Education settings to help alleviate the impact of hate crimes on campus. Dr Walter's provided an overview of the 'RESTORE' programme, which provides resolutions through voluntary action including emotional, relational, multi-agency, moral learning, and material support to those who have experienced hate crime.

Second, Dr Ernest Quimby (Howard University) presented ideas about the alignment of restorative justice with social justice in light of persistent racial inequalities across societies, where he recognises that individuals and organisations need to go beyond kneejerk emotional reactions to achieve sustainable and achievable policies. I found this an important area of development coming from a mixed heritage background where my Grandparents have countless encountered obstacles because of their race. Moving to a world where there is less discrimination and more equality is something that resonates with me as a result.

The opportunity to listen to the experience of the speakers at the conference ignited a deeper interest that has encouraged me to think more restoratively and consider how

these ideas can be brought into future professional and personal roles. It is particularly evident to me now that the use of RJ is not exclusive to criminal justice settings, which I believe is a common misconception. I would highly recommend this conference to anyone who has an interest in developing strong relationships across any institution, and in particular to those who are seeking well rounded and realistic views on how restorative practices could be integrated into their organisations and communities.

Hannah Hassanali

University of Nottingham

My Experience of Attending the 2nd Annual RJC



I feel well placed to speak about my experience of attending the conference because this is the second RJC conference I attended. The first

was in 2019 when I was an undergraduate student of Criminology and Social Policy at the University of Nottingham and I really got to understand how what we were being taught in class translated into the world of practice. When I attended the 2nd annual conference (now as a postgraduate student and as a newly recruited intern on placement at the RJC) I witnessed the collaboration, debate, challenges, and progress within the field. Among the many speakers and themes that emerged from the conference, three themes caught my attention.

First, I was particularly interested in the discussions concerning facilitator diversity and life experiences because issues of power imbalances are threaded through discussions of the policy that I study. Power imbalances and biases can negatively impact a restorative process and facilitators may conduct their role more effectively if they have varied life experiences and a shared understanding with stakeholders in similar situations. This could impact stakeholder engagement, as it may increase levels of trust and perceived legitimacy if

you can communicate with someone who looks like you or has experienced similar difficulties.

Second, the COVID-19 pandemic has increased the use of online platforms for RJ and speakers discussed several risks and innovations stemming from the use of technology in RJ processes. Particular issues created by a virtual environment that practitioners raised are the inability to control who is present in the physical area and maintaining mental wellbeing and support for participants. Despite these risks, participants also drew attention to the increased participation of those stakeholders who are reluctant to meet in-person due to fear and/or shame. Evidently, the technology we have been forced to use during the pandemic could be further embedded into RJ processes in the future.

Finally, I was really struck by the notion and development of restorative cities as a concept because I had not come across it before. Mariam Liebmann explored the progress of cities in the UK, which have exemplified some valuable benefits and challenges. I was surprised to learn that my city has been working towards restorative status! Ivo Aertsen and Gian Luigi Lepri discussed the approaches and experience in Belgium and Italy, respectively. As an International Social Policy student, of interest was how varied the experiences and responses of different countries are. Having these presentations at the end of the conference connoted progress and the

broadening and embedding of restorative values into the fabric of cities in the future.

Overall, it became evident when reflecting on the conference, that elements that stifle restorative practice development are inefficiencies in communication, knowledge sharing and lesson drawing both at home and abroad. One way to overcome this is the sharing and interrogating of approaches and perspectives at conferences like this one. This will help to improve not only service quality, but our relationships with the progressing dynamics of RJ and how we translate these values into our actions in our daily lives.

Becky Bull

Postgraduate student, University of Nottingham

Intern, RJC

Book review:

Peacemaking circles & urban youth: bringing justice home

Carolyn Boyes-Watson. St Paul, MN: Living Justice Press, 2008. 280 pp.

ISBN 978-0-9721886-4-7 pbk.

In 1988 a young woman named Molly Baldwin started working with young people in deprived suburbs of Boston, MA, including many immigrants from the world's trouble spots. Her programme, Roca (Spanish for 'Rock'), developed into a place where young people could relate to adults, who support them and help to meet their needs. Seven years ago, Roca adopted the Indigenous practice of holding Circles, in which each person only speaks, in turn, when holding the 'talking piece'. Professor Boyes-Watson has written an enthusiastic book about the benefits of this method – indeed more than a method, it is a philosophy.

It is written in a very readable style and has a remarkably thorough 18-page index. The author expresses her concern for the people involved by including many photos of young people and staff, and quotations from them.

It is characteristic that the 'keeper' (facilitator) of the Circle does not lay down ground rules: members of the Circle do that themselves, sometimes taking a long time over it – and learning lessons about relationships in the process. An organization using Circles is one that

learns, Boyes-Watson says. Its core values are belonging, generosity, competence, and independence – which in turn places responsibility on individuals for their own conduct. 'You are loved, you are accepted, but this is what is expected of you' (p. 46). There are also four strategies for applying these values: street work and outreach, transformational relationships, peacemaking circles, and open opportunities. Once contact has been made through the outreach work, Circles are the essential way of working, 557 were held in one year. The way they are conducted is briefly described.

Circles are used for empowerment, but linked with accountability: mistakes are not punished, but seen as opportunities for growth, for learning how to live with ourselves and others. They are a space for healing; people who have suffered can 'share their stories in a setting where they can be respectfully heard' (p. 146). They are also used for managing the programme and solving problems, in place of hierarchy and bureaucracy which, as one official says, 'doesn't cultivate speaking up, bureaucracy cultivates grumbling' (p. 191). Contrary to the conventional, retributive idea of justice, a Roca worker says 'I don't think justice is winning. I think justice is healing' (p. 223); and another, that 'For me, justice means some sort of democracy, some sort of way of

being without punishment – to me, that's justice' (p. 225).

This is a persuasive account of a dynamic, idealistic project, with potential to inspire great changes. It recognises the structural flaws in present-day society (though without dwelling on them); Circles can help people to cope with these, but to change them may take a little longer. Sometimes one wonders whether they always work as well as this; 'In circles ... people participate as full human beings. They speak from the heart' (p. 193). Often, no doubt – but does it always work? The other gap in this account is any mention of how the project, evidently quite well staffed, is funded. Clearly that is not the angle the author sets out to describe, but it would be surprising if money worries never impinged – or did Circles help to overcome those too? It is good to know, however, how the book itself was funded: by the generosity of a family which had benefited using Circles. The book is recommended for anyone looking for a better, more humane way of living and working together in a programme, an organisation, or ultimately in a society.

Martin Wright

Join in the discussion!

We want people to share their expertise with the broader restorative justice community.

Please visit our website and participate on our “join the discussion” blog.



In this edition of Resolution we explore the complexities of supporting participants with a mental health diagnosis.

We are working with the Network of Restorative Practitioners in Mental Health to develop additional practitioner guidance to support those who are facilitating restorative processes with participants who have a mental health diagnosis.

The network has been established to bring communities together to promote mental well-being and recovery for people who have experienced harm as a result of the impact of mental illness. Poor mental health takes a toll on those who suffer from it but the impact of poor mental health extends to people who are affected by the behaviour of someone with these difficulties when they commit acts that cause harm to others, be they family, partners, friends, neighbours or members of the public. It has long been the case that those who experience harm in this way, and those who cause harm as a result of their mental health difficulties, do not have access to the benefits that restorative justice can bring.

All people who have experienced harm in the context of mental health difficulties should have access to restorative justice processes. In order for this to happen, the mental health practitioner community, the criminal justice agencies and the restorative justice practitioner community need to

work together more effectively to understand what is needed and how this can be enabled.

The guidance we are developing will provide a valuable resource to support practitioners to understand the complexities of a mental health diagnosis and how they may need to adapt their practice.

To inform the content of this publication we would like to invite you to complete a short survey. These questionnaires focus on how you currently use restorative practice within your setting, your experience of facilitating cases with participants who have a mental health diagnosis and what additional guidance you feel would be beneficial.

If you currently work in an inpatient or community health service, please use the link below to access the survey.

[Inpatient and Community Mental Health Services](#)

For practitioners working in other settings, please access the survey using the link below.

[Other Restorative Practice Services](#)

Find out how you can join in the discussion and read the full article **[here](#)**.



Read our latest posts and join in the discussion on a range of subjects related to restorative practice on **[Resolution Online](#)**

Please continue to submit your questions to us online by **[CLICKING HERE](#)** or @RJCouncil on twitter using hashtag #RJdiscussion

A day in the life of Julie Potts

We ask restorative justice practitioners, academics and policy-makers about their experiences of restorative justice

Summarise your role in 10 words

I would describe my role as exciting, creative, rewarding, authentic, challenging (positively), accountable, reliable, committed, and supportive.

Who has been the most significant influence on your thinking/practice on RP?

This is very easy for me to answer, it is, and always will be for me, Charlotte Calkin; meeting her and experiencing first-hand the passion she has for restorative justice/practice was one of those moments in life where everything changes.

What has been the single most significant impact of RP on your organisation?

Subjectively, the way that everyone who experiences RP sees the absolute value it brings, and the passion they themselves then have and share with others. Objectively, it would be the 60% reduction in formal grievances.

When it comes to implementing RP, what approach would you recommend: trying and failing or only focusing on where it will 'work'?

Focusing on where it will make the biggest impact and then evolving this further, (aligned to organisational culture and fit); not just to see it as a 'bolt on'.

What is the single biggest challenge for RP within employee relations?

Moving people, at all levels, from historic and established positions of leader/subordinate (parent/child) into 'adult'. This can be very uncomfortable, and it forces people to reevaluate everything, take more accountability and consequently adopt different behaviours.

What can people working in different fields learn from the application of RP within the employee relations setting?

It's putting the focus back on 'human' within 'human resource management'.

Where do you see RP within employee relations moving next?

As the natural, and logical, foundation of the employment relationship.

If you could make everyone in the field read one book, what would it be?

Rebel Ideas: The Power of Diverse Thinking by Matthew Syed.

You're at the end of the rainbow and you've got that pot of gold. What next?

To inspire and support other organisations to see the value that RP brings to the employment relationship.

Julie Potts

Head of Employee Relations – Aster Group UK

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News in brief

University of Gloucestershire launches Advanced Restorative Practitioner PgCert

The university has worked closely with the RJC to create a course, designed for people already working as practitioners, to develop the skills, knowledge and expertise required to progress to advanced status. As this is an RJC Approved Course, those successfully completing the course will be able to apply for Advanced Registered Practitioner status while gaining a valuable academic qualification.

Read the full article [here](#)



Salus awarded Registered Training provider status



The RJC is pleased to announce that Salus have been awarded Registered Training Provider status along with course approval for their Foundation Level – 3 Day Skills Based Restorative Practitioner Training. Salus has been delivering restorative practice training and specialist support to professionals working with children, young people and the community for over 10 years. They have been long standing members of the RJC and have held our Training Provider Quality Mark (TPQM) since 2015.

Read the full article [here](#)

[Read more articles online here](#)

RJC Conference 2021

SAVE THE DATE!



Our 3rd annual conference is due to be held online on the 22nd and 23rd November 2021. The theme for this year's conference is 'The Restorative Web: Justice in a Polarised World'

Over the course of 2 days we will explore:

- Overcoming inequalities and vulnerabilities using restorative justice
- Restorative responses to complex challenges
- Restorative justice in new and emerging sectors
- Implementing restorative justice in punitive climates

We will shortly be launching our **Call for Abstracts** and **Early Bird** registration will open on **1 July 2021**



Notices

Notices

Supporting the RJC

You can support the RJC by becoming a member or supporting us by making a donation.

Your support will help us to:

Campaign for widespread use of restorative justice in the criminal justice system, in schools, in the workplace, and elsewhere in the community in situations where conflict may arise.

Fund activities which raise the profile of restorative justice in the media and with the public.

Develop and promote agreed standards and principles for evaluating and guiding restorative practice.

Advance education and research on restorative justice and the publication of the useful results of that research.

Your support will help the RJC create a society where high-quality restorative practice is available to all. I very much hope you will join us.

Jim Simon Chief Executive, The Restorative Justice Council

Become a member of the [RJC](#) or [Make a donation](#)

Amazon Smile

You can now support the RJC every time you shop!

When you shop with AmazonSmile, Amazon will make a donation to the Restorative Justice Council Limited.

AmazonSmile is a website operated by Amazon with the same products, prices, and shopping features as Amazon.com. The difference is that when you shop on AmazonSmile, the AmazonSmile Foundation will donate 0.5% of the purchase price of eligible products to the RJC. Every item available for purchase on www.amazon.com is also available on AmazonSmile (www.smile.amazon.com) at the same price.

Your support will make a real difference!

Register your support with [Amazon Smile here](#)

About us

About the RJC

The Restorative Justice Council (RJC) is the independent third sector membership body for the field of restorative practice. It provides quality assurance and a national voice advocating the widespread use of all forms of restorative practice, including restorative justice. The RJC's vision is of a restorative society where everyone has access to safe, high quality restorative practice wherever and whenever it is needed.

Resolution is the quarterly newsletter of the RJC. Please get in touch if you have any feedback or you would like to submit an article.

The articles in this newsletter express the personal views of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the RJC.

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For more information email enquiries@restorativejustice.org.uk or visit www.restorativejustice.org.uk.