

DEFINITION OF RESTORATIVE JUSTICE

Tony F. Marshall's (1996) definition appears to encompass the main principles of 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 and its implications for the future" (p. 37; cf. Braithwaite, 1999, p. 5). The fundamental premise of the restorative justice paradigm is that crime is a violation of people and relationships (Zehr, 1990) rather than merely a violation of law.

According to Llewellyn and Howse (1998), the main elements of the restorative process involve voluntariness, truth telling, and a face-to-face encounter.

RESTORATIVE JUSTICE MODELS

Models of restorative justice can be grouped into three categories: circles, conferences, and victim-offender mediations. Although somewhat distinct in their practices, the principles employed in each model remain similar. A restorative justice program may be initiated at any point in the criminal justice system and need not be used simply for diversionary purposes. Currently, there are identified entry points into the criminal justice system where offenders may be referred to a restorative justice program: police (pre-charge); courts (pre-sentence); corrections (post-sentence); probation/parole (while under supervision).

VICTIM SATISFACTION

Participation in a restorative justice program resulted in higher victim satisfaction ratings (Latimer, 2005). Proponents of restorative justice claim that the process is beneficial to victims and offenders by emphasizing recovery of the victim through redress, vindication, and healing and by encouraging recompense by the offender through reparation, fair treatment, and habilitation (Van Ness & Strong, 1997). In the process of coming together to restore relationships, the community is also provided with an opportunity to heal through the reintegration of victims and offenders (Llewellyn & Howse, 1998).

RESTITUTION COMPLIANCE

One of the potential advantages of a restorative justice approach is that it could be more effective in ensuring offender compliance with restitution agreements. This would be a significant contribution as the victims would have a greater likelihood of receiving compensation for the harm caused by the criminal activity and the offenders would be actively accepting responsibility.

RECIDIVISM

Arguably, one of the most important outcome variables for any form of criminal justice intervention is recidivism. Restorative justice programs, on average, yielded reductions in recidivism compared to nonrestorative approaches to criminal behavior (Latimer, 2005).

EVIDENCE RATING

Scientifically Supported – Highest Rated: Strategies with this rating are most likely to make a difference. These strategies have been tested in many robust studies with consistently positive results.

Implementation Examples

Restorative justice has been implemented in some states, such as Illinois¹⁷, and in many American Indian and Alaska Native communities¹⁸. City-level efforts are also underway in many communities, including Baltimore's Community Conferencing Center¹⁹, Brooklyn's Common Justice²⁰, and Minneapolis' victim-offender mediation program²¹.

Implementation Resources

[CJR-RJ](#) - Center for Justice and Reconciliation (CJR). Restorative Justice (RJ).

Results First Clearinghouse Database Resources

** Journal subscription may be required for access.*

¹ [Latimer 2005*](#) - Latimer J, Dowden C, Muise D. The effectiveness of restorative justice practices: A meta-analysis. *The Prison Journal*. 2005;85(2):127–44.

² [Daly 2016](#) - Daly K. What is restorative justice? Fresh answers to a vexed question. *Victims & Offenders*. 2016;11(1):9–29.

³ [Koss 2014*](#) - Koss MP. The RESTORE Program of restorative justice for sex crimes: Vision, process, and outcomes. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*. 2014;29(9):1623–1660.

⁴ [Sherman 2007](#) - Sherman LW, Strang H. *Restorative justice: The evidence*. London, UK: Smith Institute; 2007.

⁵ [Campbell-Strang 2013](#) - Strang H, Sherman LW, Mayo-Wilson E, Woods D, Ariel B. Restorative justice conferencing (RJC) using face-to-face meetings of offenders and victims: Effects on offender recidivism and victim satisfaction: A systematic review. *Campbell Systematic Reviews*. 2013:12.

⁶ [Sherman 2015](#) - Sherman LW, Strang H, Barnes G, et al. Twelve experiments in restorative justice: The Jerry Lee program of randomized trials of restorative justice conferences. *Journal of Experimental Criminology*. 2015;11(4):501–540.

⁷ [Schwalbe 2012*](#) - Schwalbe CS, Gearing RE, MacKenzie MJ, Brewer KB, Ibrahim R. A meta-analysis of experimental studies of diversion programs for juvenile offenders. *Clinical Psychology Review*. 2012;32(1):26–33.

⁸ [Hipple 2014*](#) - Hipple NK, Gruenewald J, McGarrell EF. Restorativeness, procedural justice, and defiance as predictors of reoffending of participants in family group conferences. *Crime & Delinquency*. 2014;60(8):1131–1157.

⁹ [Angel 2014*](#) - Angel CM, Sherman LW, Strang H, et al. Short-term effects of restorative justice conferences on post-traumatic stress symptoms among robbery and burglary victims: A randomized controlled trial. *Journal of Experimental Criminology*. 2014;10(3):291–307.

¹⁰ [Nugent 2004*](#) - Nugent WR, Williams M, Umbreit MS. Participation in victim-offender mediation and the prevalence of subsequent delinquent behavior: A meta-analysis. *Research on Social Work Practice*. 2004;14(6):408–16.

- ¹¹ [Rodriguez 2007*](#) - Rodriguez N. Restorative justice at work: Examining the impact of restorative justice resolutions on juvenile recidivism. *Crime & Delinquency*. 2007;53(3):355–79.
- ¹² [De Beus 2007*](#) - De Beus K, Rodriguez N. Restorative justice practice: An examination of program completion and recidivism. *Journal of Criminal Justice*. 2007;35(3):337-347.
- ¹³ [Bergseth 2013*](#) - Bergseth KJ, Bouffard JA. Examining the effectiveness of a restorative justice program for various types of juvenile offenders. *International Journal of Offender Therapy and Comparative Criminology*. 2013;57(9):1054-1075.
- ¹⁴ [Cochrane-Livingstone 2013](#) - Livingstone N, Macdonald G, Carr N. Restorative justice conferencing for reducing recidivism in young offenders (aged 7 to 21) (Review). *Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews*. 2013;(2):CD008898.
- ¹⁵ [Choi 2012*](#) - Choi JJ, Bazemore G, Gilbert MJ. Review of research on victims' experiences in restorative justice: Implications for youth justice. *Children and Youth Services Review*. 2012;34(1):35–42.
- ¹⁶ [WSIPP-Benefit cost](#) - Washington State Institute for Public Policy (WSIPP). Benefit-cost results.
- ¹⁷ [IBARJ](#) - Illinois Balanced and Restorative Justice (IBARJ). Strengthening community through restorative justice.
- ¹⁸ [Tribal Youth-RJ](#) - Tribal Youth Resource Center, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention. Archived webinars - Philosophy and practice: Restorative justice and restorative approaches in tribal communities (RJ).
- ¹⁹ [CCC-Baltimore](#) - Community Conferencing Center (CCC). Baltimore, MD.
- ²⁰ [CJ-Brooklyn](#) - Vera Institute of Justice. Common Justice (CJ).
- ²¹ [OJJDP Model Programs](#) - Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP). OJJDP model programs guide.