

Williston Community Justice Center

Introduction to Restorative Justice

A word cloud of values and concepts related to restorative justice. The words are arranged in a roughly triangular shape, with the largest words in the center and smaller words around the edges. The colors range from light blue to dark blue.

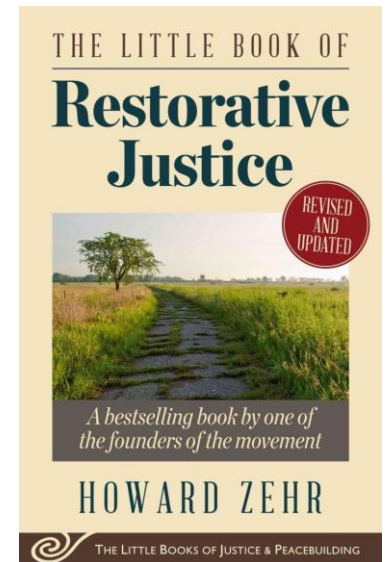
Words included in the word cloud:

- Inclusive
- Repair
- Collaboration
- Response
- Responsibility
- Seen
- Voice
- Integrity
- Values
- Process
- Choice
- Equity
- Curiosity
- Continuity
- Community
- Courage
- Relationship
- Heard
- Empathy
- Healing
- Connection
- Dignity
- Creativity
- Honesty
- Respect For All

Definition of Restorative Justice

- “Restorative Justice is an approach to achieving justice that involves, to the extent possible, those who have a stake in a specific offense or harm to collectively identify and address harms, needs, and obligations in order to heal and put things as right as possible.”

- Howard Zehr



The Williston Community Justice Center

- Make up of 2 staff, 30 adult volunteers and 10 youth volunteers
- Serves the following towns:
 - Williston
 - Richmond
 - Huntington
 - Hinesburg
 - St. George
 - Bolton
 - Other areas determined by school

The WCJC is funded by...

- A grant through the Vermont Department of Corrections as well as financial support from the Williston Police Department and additional services provided by the Town of Williston

Who are our partners?

- Grant funders and financial supports
- Vermont Department of Corrections
- The police departments of Williston, Richmond, Hinesburg, Vermont State Police, Vermont Sheriffs and Vermont Fish and Game
 - Additional partners to include: Chittenden County State's Attorneys, Probation and Parole, Department of Children and Families, School, Neighborhood Associations, Businesses, and other Human Service Agencies

Differences between Restorative and Criminal Justice

Restorative Justice

- Crime is a violation of people and relationships
- Violations create obligations
- Justice involves
 - o Victims
 - o Responsible Parties
 - o Community Members
- The effort is set forth to repair the harm and “put things right.”

3 Questions of Restorative Justice:

- 1.) Who has been harmed?
- 2.) What are their needs?
- 3.) Whose obligations are these?

Criminal Justice

- Crime is a violation of the law and the state
- Violations create guilt
- Justice requires the state to determine blame/ guilt and assign a punishment
- “You get what you deserve.”

3 Questions of Criminal Justice:

- 1.) What laws have been broken?
- 2.) Who did it?
- 3.) What do they deserve?

Williston CJC Restorative Processes

- Community Conversations and Dialogue
- Peace Circles
- Healing Circles
- Restorative Panels
- Restorative Circles
- Restorative Conferences
- Family Group Conferences



What does the Willison Community Justice Center Offer?

The Restorative Justice Panel Process:

- Having the Responsible Party take ownership of the infraction
- The Responsible Party, victim(s) and community volunteers work together to make a legal contract that addresses how repair will be made to the victim, community, and to self
- Allowing the victim, responsible party, and the community to have a voice
- Our Board of community volunteers is comprised of 30 members
 - 20 adults, 10 youths
- Collecting restitution for victim(s)
- Community Connections and Engagement

Education, Trainings, and Classes on the Following:

- Elder Bullying
- Sexting
- Social Justice Dialogue
- Racial injustice and dialogue
- Racism
- Revenge Porn
- Bullying
- Safe Driving
- Internet Safety and Cyber Civility
- Restorative Dialogue and Practices
- Restorative Circles
- Life Skill Classes
 - Living on \$2 A Day
 - Budgeting
 - Resource Networking
- Resume Building
- Employment/Housing Assistance
- Educational forums on:
 - Substance abuse and addiction
 - Restorative Parenting
 - Poverty Circles

Working in the Community:

- State and local government
- Schools
- Collaboration with Law Enforcement to address community need and injustice
- Community Organizations
- Places of Business
- Senior Housing
- Low-income Housing

Youth Leadership:

- Youth Panel
- Mentorships
- Internships
- Grad Challenge

Other:

- Mediation/ Conflict Resolution
 - Peer-to-Peer
 - Business-to-Business
- Family/ Group Conferencing
- Reparative & Restorative Panels
- Restorative Conferences
- Restorative Circles
- Peace Circles
- Volunteer Committee Work i.e. Social Justice/Community Need

The Restorative Panel Process

*additional services provided include restorative circles, conference, dialogues and mediations

Panel Process

1

Intake Meeting:

- Meeting between CJC staff member and responsible party
- Get to know the responsible party (interests, talents, goals...)
- Describe difference between Restorative Justice and Criminal Justice
- Make sure the responsible party takes accountability for their crime and understand why they have been referred to the CJC
- Explain the rest of the panel process (i.e. panel meeting, contract, completion)

2

Panel Meeting:

- Panel consists of 3-4 board members
- Affected part(ies) will be asked to join if they choose, if they don't want attend, staff will work with them to participate in other ways as agreed upon
- Responsible party will be asked to be honest and truthful in sharing what happened
- Board members will ask questions and share thoughts
- Board members and responsible party will work together on creating a legal contract which includes elements to make amends in the following three categories: affected party, community, and self
- Responsible party is given 30-60 days to complete the contract and come back for their completion meeting

3

Completion Meeting:

- Responsible party brings back the entirety of their contract work, completed, and presents it to the board and affected part(ies)
- The board decides if the responsible party has met the terms of their contract, and if so, the responsible party will receive a completion letter via mail and in most cases will not have the charge on their criminal record
- If the board decides the responsible party has not completed their contract, the case will be sent back to the referring agency, or given an extension depending on extenuating circumstances

Goal of Panel Process...

For responsible party to make repair and address the harm in a meaningful way to:

- 1.) Affected part(ies)
- 2.) Community
- 3.) Responsible party (personal repair)

Restorative Justice... What it is vs. what it's not

Connections/Relationships **NOT** Isolation/Removal

Responsibility &
Accountability **NOT** Blame, Shame, OR Guilty vs.
Innocent

Contribution **NOT** Act

Needs **NOT** Wants

With **NOT** To/For

Curiosity **NOT** Assumption

Resolution & Agreement Focused **NOT** Punishment or Consequence

Promotes responsibility,
accountability and obligation **NOT** Soft on crime

Conflict vs. Resolution

Conflict



Blame



Shame



Finger-pointing



Punishment



Label, Guilt, Low/Poor Self Esteem,
Singled-out

Resolution



Responsibility



Accountability



Obligation



Amends



Repair= Value, Membership,
Ownership, Community

Restorative Justice and Community Conversations

Promote:

- Personal Responsibility
- Personal Accountability
- Community > Responsibility and Accountability
- Ownership and Membership
- Growth
- Respect
- Critical Thinking
- Participatory Decision Making
- Healthy Relationships
- Curiosity
- Meaningful Participation
- Engagement
- Safety

Provide:

- Voice to “All”
- Opportunity
- Perspective Taking
- Framework for Understanding
- “Agency”
- Options for Responsible Party
- Voice/Choice for those Harmed
 - What they need to feel safe, heard, respected, repair, etc.

Outcomes:

- Stronger and Healthier Relationships and Communities
- Positive or Increased Self Esteem
- Builds Connections
- Repairs Harm
- Healthy Ways of Living and Being with One Another
- Increased Communication and Relationship Building

Benefits to Responsible Parties

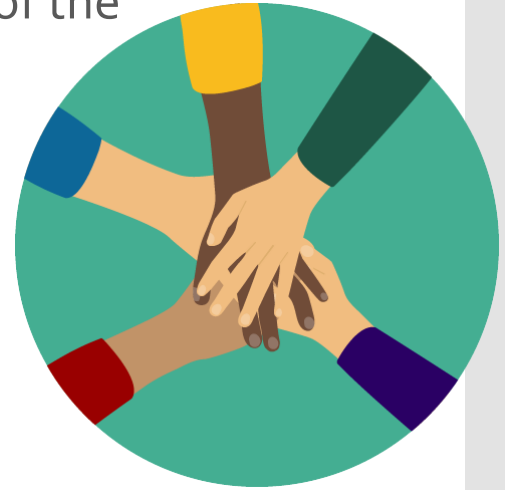
- Responsible parties are actively involved in the justice process
- Responsible parties are treated with respect and dignity
- Responsible parties gain an understanding of the harm their actions have caused
- Responsible parties are held accountable and responsible without blame or shame
- Focus is on process and outcomes, and not necessarily punishment
- Responsible party is given the opportunity to make things right and make amends to those they have harmed
- Responsible party is given the opportunity to build meaningful and positive connections with their community once repair has been made
- The likelihood of reoffending is decreased as a result of restorative engagement

Benefits to Impacted Parties

- Impacted party engagement is voluntary
- Restorative Justice is a non-adversarial process
- Impacted party's perspective and experience is central to the process
- Impacted party's have voice and choice
- Opportunity to share their story and experience
- Impacted party's needs and requests for repair are listened to and validated
- Opportunity to face responsible party
- Opportunity to get answers for what happened to them and why
- Engage with a facilitated process that is victim-centered
- Impacted party has the opportunity to receive community support

Benefits to the Community

- Opportunity to be involved in the health and well-being of the community
- Increased safety
- Reduced recidivism and crime rates
- Cost-effective
- Promotes community engagement and responsibility
- Builds community connections and relationships
- Involves stakeholders and impacted parties
- Rebuilds trust among the community
- Provides opportunity for innovative responses to crime
- Provides second chances for meaningful connection
- Community members work together to define and carry out justice in a non-adversarial, non-punitive way



How do I become a volunteer?

Step 1:

Visit <https://willistonjustice.org/> and go to the “Joining the Board” tab

Step 2:

Follow the directions listed and fill out the application either virtually or by printing it and mailing it in to:

Town of Williston
Attn: Town Manager Wells
7900 Williston Rd,
Williston, VT 05495

Step 3:

If the application is accepted, you will be contacted by the Williston Community Justice Center’s Executive Director, Cristalee McSweeney, for an interview

Step 4:

After this interview, you will be given paperwork to be filled out for the Department of Corrections. A background check will follow.

Step 5:

If all of the above paperwork and interviews are complete, you will go before Williston Town’s Select Board for approval

Step 6:

Attend Department of Corrections and Williston Community Justice Center trainings

