

Guiding principles and restorative practices for crime victims and survivors

BY SANDRA PAVELKA AND ANNE SEYMOUR

The authors dedicate this article to the late, great Dennis Maloney, a pioneer in promoting restorative justice principles and practices within the criminal and juvenile justice systems, crime victim services and communities across the U.S.

Restorative justice, which is realized in states and localities as an innovative framework that provides a foundation for fairness in justice policies and practice, views and responds to wrongful occurrences and crime with an alternate and innovative approach. The ultimate goal of restorative justice is to repair the harm caused by a wrongful incident, while addressing the needs of the victim, offender and the community.¹ Opportunities are provided for those most directly affected by crime to be involved in responding to its impact. This approach ultimately seeks to address the myriad of needs of victims and ensure individual and community safety, while the alleged or convicted defendant is held accountable and develops competencies in order to become a better and more productive person.

The principles and practices aligned with restorative justice have been applied to educational settings, prevention, intervention and diversion initiatives, crime victim and survivor services, juvenile justice and criminal justice systems. Restorative practices and applications include: victim/offender dialogue (also called victim/offender mediation), circles, reparative and accountability boards, restorative conferencing, “Impact of Crime on Victims” programming, restorative community service, diversion and apology banks. In addition, restorative justice has been applied in comprehensive facilitative dialogue, capacity building and community development.

This article offers a historical perspective of the United States’ crime victim and survivor assistance field, and its role in restorative justice. Six guiding principles for victim- and survivor-focused restorative justice are identified by the authors, as well as restorative legislation, practices and future perspectives.



The victim assistance field in the United States

While efforts to identify and address the needs of crime victims and survivors began in the 1960s using the “lessons learned” from the women’s and civil rights movements, the emergence of the professional field of crime victim services is often cited as occurring in 1972, with the creation of the Aid of Victims of Crime in St. Louis, Missouri, Bay Area Women Against Rape in California and the Washington D.C. Rape Crisis Center – three organizations that still thrive to this day. Crime victims had few statutory rights, were viewed primarily as “witnesses” needed to secure convictions and were often blamed and shamed for their victimization. The nascent days of the field focused on passing victims’ rights laws, identifying and addressing the needs of victims across the criminal justice spectrum, as well as providing services for the majority of victims who did not report crimes to authorities.

National leadership that propelled the movement into a professional discipline was provided initially by the National Organization for Victim Assistance and victim-driven organizations founded by grieving survivors, including Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD) and the National Organization of Parents of Murdered Children. The passage of the Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) in 1984 that created a federal fund for victim assistance derived from fines and fees assessed against convicted federal defendants, along with the National “21” Drinking Age Bill promulgated by MADD, set the victim assistance profession on a path to activism that was driven by “the power of the personal story” that is still prevalent today.

The focus then of victim-driven public policy initiatives at the national, state and local levels was “tough on crime,” with collective support from victims and their advocates for longer sentences and more prisons. With victims feeling long-ignored in justice processes, the victim assistance field leaned heavily toward a punitive model of justice.

The emergence of restorative justice

The seminal work of Dr. Howard Zehr, Kay Prafnis and Dr. Mark Umbreit (among others) provided a

foundation for restorative justice primarily at the state and local levels as the victim assistance profession was becoming a driving force in criminal and juvenile justice policy.^{2,3,4} Compelling arguments were presented for a problem-solving approach, challenging policymakers and stakeholders to develop a justice system that worked more efficiently and fairly with a morally decent alternative.⁵ Empirical evidence found that the restorative alternatives, more often than court-based solutions, have the capacity to satisfy victims’ expectations of achieving a meaningful role in the way their cases were processed, as well as delivering restoration, especially emotional restoration, from the harm victims have suffered.⁶ The concept of offender accountability — to their victims, their own families and their communities — was a stark but interesting contrast to the existing “tough on crime” approach. Two federal initiatives brought this concept to the masses across the United States. Further, these initiatives provided an alternative perspective to potentially have a profoundly positive effect on the justice system by incorporating community participation, victim involvement and restoration.⁷

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In 1996, the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) National Institute of Corrections (NIC) sponsored a teleconference on restorative justice that was attended by over 20,000 people in the U.S. and Canada. The teleconference proposed restorative justice principles that were victim-centered and focused on the need to provide opportunities for offender accountability and community involvement to improve individual and public safety. →

A national summit and a series of five regional conferences followed the NIC teleconference in 1997 and 1998 on restorative justice, sponsored by the DOJ Office of Justice Programs. For thousands of justice and victim assistance practitioners and community volunteers, this was their “introduction” to the powerful potential of restorative justice as a foundation for justice and victim assistance policies and practices. Community-level teams returned to their jurisdictions across the nation with a new toolbox of restorative justice research and resources that focused on the harm that crime causes to individuals and to communities; and the need for innovative approaches that engage victims, offenders and communities in repairing such harm.

Leadership provided by national justice organizations

The “jump-start” provided by the DOJ’s restorative justice leadership became the impetus for national criminal justice and corrections organizations to address restorative justice in a meaningful way. By the early 1990s, three leading organizations — the American Correctional Association, the American Probation and Parole Association and the Association of Paroling Authorities International — had established victim issues committees to promote victim and survivor sensitivity in national policy and program development. The National Association of Victim Assistance in Corrections was founded to promote victims’ rights and services in the post-sentencing phases of cases. The dissemination and replication of restorative justice policies and practices became a priority of these leadership organizations, as evidenced by the ongoing and recent work of the ACA Victims and Restorative Justice Committee.

One of the main focal points of this committee has been to include language in ACA’s Standards and Policies that acknowledges victim/offender dialogue (VOD) as a viable restorative justice program in corrections. The standards were approved in August 2016, with the following language:

“Where a facilitated victim/offender dialogue program exists, written policy, procedure and practice provide that there is a program initiated and requested only by a victim or victim/survivor that provides an opportunity for such victims or

survivors to meet face-to-face or by other means with the inmate responsible for their victimization in a safe, secure and confidential setting after thorough preparation with, and with the assistance of a properly trained facilitator.”

The definition submitted for review to the ACA Committee on Performance-Based Standards is as follows:

“Victim Offender Dialogue (VOD) is a post-conviction, victim-initiated process that includes preparation, dialogue and follow-up guided by a trained facilitator. Participation in the VOD program is completely voluntary for the victim/survivor and for the offender. Either party is always at liberty to withdraw from the VOD preparation or dialogue process at any time, and VOD is not intended to directly affect the offender’s prison, parole, or community supervision (probation) status.”

Criminal justice and correctional organizations that initiate VOD programs should adhere to the “20 Principles of Victim-Centered Victim Offender Dialogue,” endorsed by NAVAC, which are available on their website. In addition, VOCA Rule 28 CFR Part 94 includes restorative justice efforts (e.g., Tribal community-led meetings and peace-keeping activities) along with beneficial or therapeutic value suited to meet victim needs.

Guiding principles of victim- and survivor-centered restorative justice

Decades of experience resulting from leadership and commitment from the crime victim and survivor assistance field and allied national justice organizations have helped define six basic principles of victim and survivor-centered restorative justice:

1. Crime is personal

Everyone has been or knows a victim of crime. Crime has significant and varying effects on individuals, families, friends and communities. The impact of crime results in physical, financial, psychological, social and spiritual consequences. A significant amount of crime involves acquaintance or family crime and interpersonal crime. The relationship between victims and offenders has been

examined in many contexts, including proximity to the home, duration of stalking, method of homicide and fear of rape or sexual assault. In addition, the degree of intimacy that exists between victims and offenders has traditionally been as major a variable in the outcome in cases of violent crimes in the criminal justice system.⁸

2. Restorative justice must be victim-centered and trauma-informed

Crime victims and survivors often feel removed from services and support that can help them in the immediate, short and long-term, and from criminal and juvenile justice system processes that should be designed to protect them. In 2015, the DOJ found that only 9.1 percent of victims of serious violent crime sought assistance from a victim services program.⁹ By addressing the victim's trauma and needs, restorative justice can more clearly define the harm caused by crime and its impact on survivors, and develop approaches to address such harm.

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services defines "trauma-informed" to be based upon three E's: events, experience of the event and effect. According to SAMHSA's conceptual framework:

"Individual trauma results from an event, series of events, or set of circumstances that is experienced by an individual as physically or emotionally harmful or life-threatening, and that has lasting adverse effects on the individual's functioning and mental, physical, social, emotional or spiritual well-being."¹⁰

3. The voices of victims/survivors in restorative justice are integral to its effectiveness and overall success

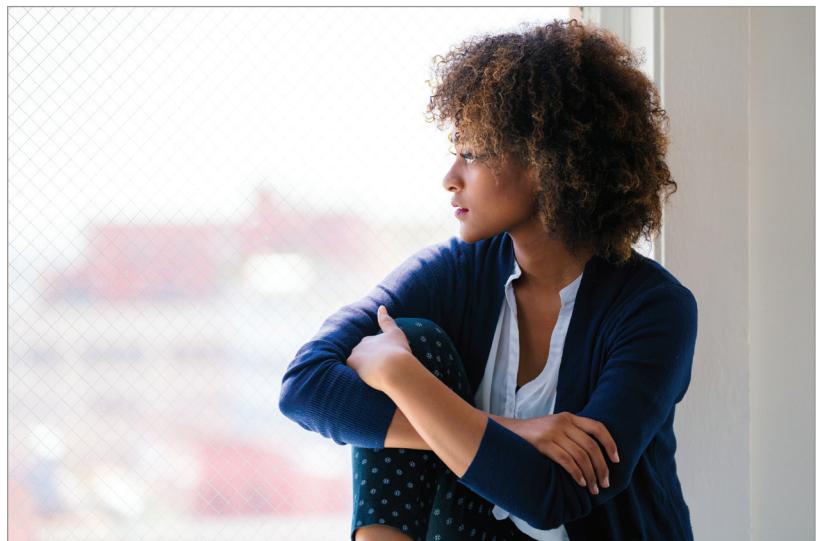
The "power of the personal story" from victims and survivors has driven the nation's victim assistance field since its inception nearly half a century ago, and has been an important foundation for restorative justice over the past three decades. Nobody understands the devastating impact of crime more than someone who has experienced it. Victims' voices are often a clarion call for survivor services and justice processes that focus on offender accountability and evidence-based practices that have proven to be effective to reduce recidivism.

4. Victim autonomy must be central to all restorative justice policies and practices

Every crime victim and survivor is unique. While victimology and justice research offers valuable information about victims' needs and victim impact, restorative justice demands that programs focus on the individual survivor in the individual case. His or her feelings and opinions are central to effective restorative justice practices.

Crime victims and survivors often speak about the sense of power and control that their perpetrators exerted over them. A significant component of the healing process is to help victims regain that sense of control over their lives and, if they report crimes, over their participation in justice processes, including diversion. This includes being offered the opportunity to participate in restorative justice programs and, alternatively, the option to decline to participate. It is his or her decision — no exceptions.

Restorative practices should be made available to victims who report crimes, as well as to those (the majority) who do not. According to the National Crime Victimization Survey, in 2016, only 42 percent of violent crimes and only 26 percent of property crimes were reported to police.¹¹ Community-based victim assistance programs that are not affiliated with the criminal or juvenile justice systems — such as domestic violence programs, rape crisis centers, homicide support groups and MADD chapters — are important partners in restorative justice initiatives, as they provide services and support to all crime survivors, whether they report or not. Victims



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should also be offered the opportunity to participate in restorative practices, such as community conferencing, within diversion settings.

5. If restorative justice fails to respect and reflect victims' constitutional and statutory rights, it is not "restorative"

Currently, there are over 32,000 state laws and state constitutional amendments that define and protect victims' rights. VictimLaw identifies 12 core rights that crime victims have within the criminal justice system which includes the rights to:

- Be treated with fairness, dignity, sensitivity and respect.
- Attend and be present at criminal justice proceedings.
- Be heard in the criminal justice process, including the right to confer with the prosecutor and submit a victim impact statement at sentencing, parole and other similar proceedings.
- Be informed of proceedings and events in the criminal justice process, including the release or escape of the offender, legal rights and remedies, available benefits and services and access to records, referrals and other information.
- Protection from intimidation and harassment.
- Restitution from the offender.
- Privacy.
- Apply for crime victim compensation.
- Restitution from the offender.
- The expeditious return of personal property seized as evidence whenever possible.
- A speedy trial and other proceedings free from unreasonable delay.
- Enforcement of these rights and access to other available remedies.¹²

While these core victims' rights validate the victim's experience as someone who was harmed by crime, they also offer unique opportunities for offender accountability — to learn about victim impact; to understand the financial impact of crime on victims that can be addressed through restitution and other legal/financial obligations; and to recognize that defendants' rights in the U.S. Constitution far exceed those of victims.

6. Many justice-involved individuals — including youth, women and men — have histories of trauma and victimization that can be addressed and validated within a restorative justice framework

The association between delinquency and victimization is a common focus in juvenile justice research. Some observers have found that victimization and delinquency largely overlap, with most victims engaging in delinquency and most delinquents being victimized at some point in their lives.¹³ Women under correctional supervision are more likely to report having experienced physical and sexual abuse as children and adults than their male counterparts.¹⁴ Further, a number of studies have found that approximately 50 percent of justice-involved women report experiencing some kind of physical or sexual abuse in their lifetime with rates of trauma histories as high as 98 percent.¹⁵ While victim-centered restorative practices focus on the survivors of the crimes committed by their offenders, such practices often bring up relevant information about their personal experiences witnessing crime in the home, exposure to traumatic events and/or histories of chronic or acute victimization. Within the context of restorative practices, these factors are not intended to serve as an excuse for decisions to engage in delinquent or criminal activities, but rather as an important and sometimes mitigating factor that can affect the outcome. Anyone who is exposed to or personally victimized by violence can benefit from restorative practices that recognize the often-devastating impact of witnessing or being directly harmed by crime. The survivor-centric philosophy of restorative justice identifies and validates the impact of crime on all victims, including those who end up being justice-involved.

With victims feeling long ignored in justice processes, the victim assistance field leaned heavily toward a punitive model of justice.

Restorative justice in legislation

In 1974, Congress created the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) within the DOJ, to provide national leadership, coordination and supplemental resources to prevent and respond to juvenile delinquency and victimization. OJJDP further supports states and communities in their efforts to develop and implement effective and coordinated prevention and intervention programs, and to improve the juvenile justice system in order to protect the public, hold justice-involved youth accountable and provide treatment and rehabilitative services tailored to meet the needs of juveniles and their families.¹⁶

Two decades later, the Balanced and Restorative Justice (BARJ) Project, a national demonstration project funded by the OJJDP, worked with a number of state justice systems and stakeholders (i.e., Illinois, Minnesota, New York, Pennsylvania and others) to provide technical assistance and training to key decision makers and stakeholders in states seeking juvenile justice reform. The BARJ Project facilitated dialogue that was focused on the implementation of restorative principles and practices.¹⁷ Since that time, states across the country have expanded legislation and policy adoption to meet the needs of the significant challenges facing the justice system. State legislatures and local jurisdictions have implemented policies and laws to advance their commitment to restorative justice and justice reform. Implementation expands to include restorative practices, application to schools, and criminal and juvenile justice continua.

Further, national organizations, including the American Bar Association, American Probation and Parole Association, National Association of Community and Restorative Justice, National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges, National Council of Crime and Delinquency and National Organization for Victim Assistance have endorsed restorative justice and its principles. The United Nations has also encouraged member nations



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to adopt restorative justice in the wake of crime and violence; and has endorsed the basic principles of restorative justice and the promotion of a culture favorable to the use of restorative justice among law enforcement, judicial and social authorities, as well as communities across the world.¹⁸

The articulation of restorative justice varies generally in state statutes and codes, however, common language is pervasive across jurisdictions. A number of laws focus solely on the balanced approach mission, while others discern the restorative justice value context with or without reference to the balanced approach. Restorative language is articulated in seven state declarations which

include: holding juvenile offenders accountable for their offense, involving victims and the community in the justice process, obligating the offender to pay restitution to the victim and/or a victims' fund, improving the juvenile's ability to live more productively and responsibly in the community, and securing safer communities.¹⁹ Balanced approach terms contained in 11 state statutes or codes denote offender accountability, community protection and competency development.²⁰ Balanced and restorative justice language found in 20 states statutes or codes comprehensively addresses principles from each paradigm. It is important to note, however, that the interpretation of the language and extent to which statutes and codes incorporate restorative justice and/or the balanced approach differ across jurisdictions.

Restorative practices

Restorative practices integrate data and evidence from a number of disciplines and fields, i.e., education, psychology, social work, criminology, victimology, sociology and organizational development and leadership, in order to build safe communities, increase social capital, decrease crime and antisocial behavior, repair harm and restore relationships. Restorative practices include:

victim/offender dialogue, circles, reparative boards, restorative conferencing, “Impact of Crime on Victims” programs, restorative community service and apology banks.

Victim/offender dialogue

Victim/offender dialogue is a process that provides victims with an opportunity to meet with their offender and engage in a discussion of the crime in a safe and structured setting. Facilitated by a trained mediator, the victim is able to share his or her position about the physical, emotional and financial impact of the crime with the offender, receive answers to questions about the crime and the offender, and be involved in developing a case plan for the offender that would include restitution in order to pay back his or her financial debt. Victim/offender dialogue is implemented in all 50 states and in countries worldwide.

Circles

Restorative circles are based in aboriginal justice tradition. Circles were initiated in the mainstream U.S. criminal justice system in Minnesota in the 1990s. The

practice is now utilized throughout North America and in other parts of the world for juvenile and adult defendants and for a wide variety of offenses and settings.

As with other restorative practices, circles provide a space for encounter between the victim and the offender, but it moves beyond to involve the community in the discussion and decision-making process. Community participants may range from justice system personnel to community members concerned about the crime. All contributors, including the victim, the victim’s family, the defendant, the defendant’s family and community representatives are given a voice. Participants typically speak in turn and pass a “talking piece” around the circle.

Primarily, the circle process is designed to bring healing and understanding to the victim and the offender. Participation in the circle for all participants is voluntary, and the victim must voluntarily agree to attend without any form of coercion. The defendant accepts his/her guilt in the matter and agrees to be referred to the circle. Especially for aboriginal communities, it is important for the defendant to have deep roots in the community. Each circle is led by a “keeper,” who directs the movement of the talking piece. Only the person holding the talking piece is allowed to speak, ensuring that each person has an opportunity to be heard.

As the talking piece rounds the circle, the group discusses different topics. In addressing the crime, participants describe how they feel. For the offender, this includes why he or she committed the crime. For the victim and the community participants, the circle provides an opportunity to explain the impact the crime has economically, physically and emotionally. Through this process of sharing, participants are able to develop a strategy to address the repairing the harm caused by the crime (i.e. restitution, vocational training, letter of apology and/or community service).



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Restorative conferencing

Restorative conferences are structured meetings among victims, offenders, both parties' family and friends and other stakeholders, and are increasingly used as a diversion to the juvenile or criminal justice systems. Conferencing involves a larger group of parties impacted by the wrongful occurrence. Trained facilitators guide the discussion on how all were affected, the consequences of the offense and how best to repair the harm by developing a comprehensive case plan. The goal of the conference is to seek resolution and reparation for the wrongdoing.

Reparative boards

Reparative boards, also known as community reparative boards, neighborhood accountability boards, youth panels and/or community boards, are comprised of four-to-six community members who are trained to address assigned adult and or juvenile cases. These cases are usually non-violent and minor offenses that are diverted from the court system by the prosecutor. Meetings are public, face-to-face meetings with defendants ordered by the court to participate in the process. Victims and community members are able to talk with offenders about their behavior in a constructive manner. Case plans or sanction agreements are developed with the offenders and must be completed within a specified time period. Compliance is monitored with a final report submitted to the court upon completion.

“Impact of Crime on Victims” programs/ victim impact classes

“Impact of Crime on Victims” programs are educational programs designed to teach offenders about the human consequences of crime. Offenders are taught how crime affects the victim and the victim’s family, their own family, the community and themselves. Specific modules address property crimes, sexual assault, domestic violence, child abuse and neglect, elder abuse and neglect, drunk driving, drug-related crimes, gang violence and homicide. Victim impact classes have been adapted for both adult and juvenile offenders in diversion, probation, prison, pre-release, detention and parole-supervised settings.

A key element of the classes is the direct involvement of crime victims and victim service providers who share their personal stories of being victimized or of helping

victims to reconstruct their lives after a traumatic crime. Parents of incarcerated youth and community representatives, such as insurance adjusters or business owners, may also speak to classes. Offenders are encouraged to enter into a dialogue with the guest speakers.

Some programs integrate victim impact panels, composed of three to four victims of the particular type of crime being examined, into the curriculum. When the panel format is used, the class participants may ask questions at the end of the presentation and, with consent from panelists, can engage in discussion with the victim presenters.

Restorative community service

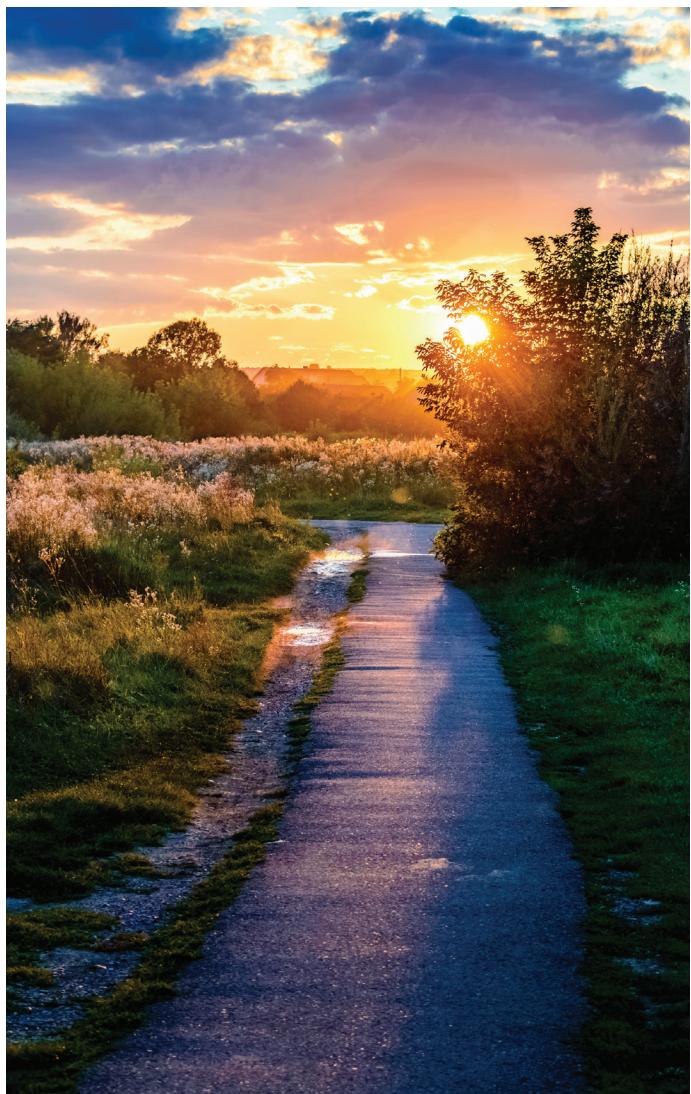
Historically, community service has played an important role in courts and corrections as a sanction to hold offenders accountable for their actions; to “pay back” the community in some way for the harm that is caused by crime; and to establish positive linkages between the offender and the community in which his or her offense occurred. In the past two decades, the concept of “restorative community service” has taken hold in many jurisdictions. Restorative community service is best described as that which is visible (to the community), viable (meaningful work that helps improve the community) and allows victim input into the types of service that is performed.¹⁹

Apology bank/apology classes

The concept of an inmate apology bank was created for victims of crime who have an interest in receiving an apology letter from the convicted defendant in their case who is in a state prison or on community supervision. Victims often wonder whether or not their offenders have taken responsibility and/or are sorry for their criminal actions. Likewise, inmates sometimes seek to put into words acceptance of fault, responsibility and/or pain caused by their actions. They may wish to write a letter of apology to the victim(s) of their crime. However, each state that participates in these programs has strict rules prohibiting inmates from directly contacting their victims. This apology program allows for the letters to be written and received without violating these rules, and the victims’ choice to access an apology letter is strictly voluntary. →

Justice reinvestment

Under the Justice Reinvestment Initiative (JRI), sponsored by the DOJ Bureau of Justice Assistance, over 30 states have implemented significant reforms by investing in a data-driven approach to improve public safety, this includes: examining corrections and related criminal justice spending, managing and allocating criminal justice populations in a more cost-effective manner and reinvesting savings in strategies that can hold offenders accountable, resulting in a decrease of crime and strengthening of neighborhoods. Many of these states have institutionalized restorative practice in their justice systems, legislation and policy.



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Jurisdictions use the justice reinvestment approach to design, enact and adopt new policies, practices and programs that reduce recidivism, improve public safety, impact prison and jail populations and otherwise help generate savings. Jurisdictions then use the justice reinvestment approach to determine how to invest a portion of the generated savings from policy changes such as reducing or averting growth in the jail and prison populations in strategies to increase public safety such as community-based treatment, probation, prevention-oriented policing strategies and community-based recidivism reduction efforts. In many states, significant reinvestments have supported the implementation of victims' rights, such as automated victim notification and victim restitution programs, and victim services.²⁰

Crime survivors and advocates are proactively engaged in all justice reinvestment efforts, and they contributed to the “Sentencing, Corrections and Public Safety Guiding Principles for Crime Victims and Survivors in America,” which are restorative in nature (see Appendix 2).

Future perspectives

The restorative justice movement is transforming communities and criminal and juvenile justice systems while specifically impacting and converging with the crime victims' profession. The authors have presented six guiding principles that include a restorative, survivor-centric approach. In order for restorative justice to be enduring and sustainable, stakeholders and communities must commit to a paradigm shift from traditional responses to wrongdoing. This change occurs collaboratively and comprehensively and includes crime victims and survivors, justice systems, justice-involved persons, schools and communities. Ultimately, this transition will result in a more responsive, more effective and just society.

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Anne Seymour is a consultant to the Pew Charitable Trusts Public Safety Performance Project, the new USDOJ National Mass Violence Victimization Resource Center, and the National Association of VOCA Assistance Administrators, among others.

Appendix 1

Resources

Defining Trauma-informed Services

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration
National Center for Trauma-informed Care
<https://www.samhsa.gov/nctic/training-technical-assistance>

Victim/Offender Dialogue

Minnesota Department of Corrections
Victim Offender Dialogue
<https://mn.gov/doc/victims/restorative-justice/victim-initiated-restorative-practices/victim-offender-dialogue/>

Circles

Living Justice Press, “About the Circle Process”
http://www.livingjusticepress.org/index.asp?SEC=51F9C610-C097-446A-8C60-05E8B4599FE7&Type=B_BASIC

Restorative Community Conferencing

Impact Justice
<http://impactjustice.org/restorative-community-conferencing/>

“Impact of Crime on Victims”

U.S. Department of Justice, Office for Victims of Crime
“Victim Impact: Listen and Learn” free standardized curriculum
<https://www.ovcttac.gov/victimimpact/>

Restorative Community Service

Justice Solutions
http://www.justicesolutions.org/art_pub.htm#service

Apology Banks

Pennsylvania Office of the Victim Advocate
Inmate Apology Bank
<http://www.ova.pa.gov/Documents/IAB%20Brochure%20ENGLISH.pdf>

Appendix 2

Sentencing, corrections and public safety, guiding principles for crime victims and survivors in America

Crime victims and survivors have an integral role in America’s criminal justice system and efforts to promote individual and public safety. The overall effectiveness of the criminal justice system relies significantly on victims’ willingness and ability to participate in justice processes.

Through national criminal justice and public safety reform efforts, victims, survivors and those who serve them have contributed to the following seven “guiding principles” for sentencing, corrections and public safety.

1. An ultimate goal of public safety policy is to reduce crime, resulting in fewer people and communities who are harmed.
2. Crime victims and survivors have a significant role in shaping criminal justice policy as individuals who know first-hand the real costs of crime.
3. Crime victims and survivors deserve to be treated with dignity and as validated persons who have

been harmed by crime, with their autonomy and privacy respected at all times.

4. Mandatory supervision of offenders who pose a serious risk to public safety upon their return to the community is essential throughout the offender re-entry process in order to promote victim and survivor safety.
5. While it is important for offenders to receive just punishment, the quantity of time that convicted offenders serve under any form of correctional supervision must be balanced with the quality of evidence-based assessment, treatment, programming and supervision they receive that can change their criminal behavior and thinking and reduce the likelihood that they will commit future crimes. For many offenses and offenders, shorter prison terms are acceptable if the resulting cost savings are

reinvested in evidence-based programs that reduce recidivism.

6. Offenders should pay all court-ordered legal and financial obligations, such as victim restitution and child support. Offender compliance with restitution and support orders is a key measure of offender accountability and the performance of offender supervision agencies.
7. Victims' rights to justice must be enforced in accordance with the law and adequately funded. Survivors and victims have a right to safety, representation and participation in the legal process.

They deserve information and notification about the status of their case and the alleged or convicted offender, access to victim assistance services, as well as restitution in all cases with pecuniary losses, and victim compensation following violent crimes.

These principles offer a foundation for the fair treatment of crime victims and survivors, and for the use of evidence-based practices that hold offenders accountable for their crimes and reduce recidivism.

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ENDNOTES

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