

Benefits of Restorative Justice

If you are a *victim*, restorative justice allows you to:

- Tell the offender how you and others have been affected
- Have a voice in deciding how the harm should be repaired
- Receive support from the community
- Have any questions answered

If you are an *offender*, restorative justice allows you to:

- Assume accountability for your actions
- Hear how your actions affected others
- Apologize to the victim(s)
- Have a voice in deciding how the harm should be repaired
- Begin the process of restoring trust.

Why Restorative Justice?

Restorative justice views crimes as harming the victim, the offender and the community. A restorative justice approach:

- ▶ *Provides the opportunity for everyone who has been directly or indirectly involved in a crime to have a voice in how to repair the harm that was caused*
- ▶ *Gives communities the opportunity to be involved in the justice process*
- ▶ *Allows individuals and communities to seek justice in a restorative and culturally relevant way*

The Roanoke City 23rd Court Service Unit strongly supports the Restorative Justice Program. Entry into this program will be reviewed at intake on a case by case basis or at any other part of the juvenile justice process. Victims and offenders may be contacted by a representative about participation in this program. If you would like more information or have any questions about restorative justice please contact Donna Chewning at:
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Restorative Justice Program



Crime wounds.....Justice should heal.



Restorative Justice and the Restorative Justice Conference

Restorative Justice... What is it?

Restorative Justice is a response to crime that emphasizes repairing the harm that was created by the wrongdoing. Restorative justice programs can provide several processes that will assist with dealing with the laws that have been broken and determine the harm that needs to be repaired. A Conference is one of the processes that is used to bring victims, offenders and community members together with a trained facilitator to talk about the offense. During this conference, each person involved is given the opportunity to voice their concerns and describe the ways in which they and others around them were harmed by the offender's behaviors. After taking responsibility for the offense and hearing the harms caused by these behaviors, the offender is made accountable not only to the law, but to the victim and others who were harmed. Often times in the Restorative Justice conference, the victim and offender make decisions together, repairing the harms, restoring the relationships, and restoring the offenders' place within their community.

Referral

After the crime has been documented, the case may be referred to the Restorative Justice Program. A restorative justice facilitator will contact the victim and the offender by phone call or letter and make an appointment to meet with them face to face. At the face to face meeting, the facilitator will talk about the offense and explain the restorative justice conference that will be set up and answer questions. A date, time and place for the conference will be decided and all participants will be informed.

The Restorative Justice Conference

The restorative justice conference will include the victim, the offender and community representatives along with the trained facilitator. Each participant will get the opportunity to talk. The offender will tell what happened and how they feel about their actions. The victim will talk about how they have been affected by the crime. Victim participation is always beneficial because it is an opportunity for the victim to be heard and ask any relevant questions relating



to the incident. Victims may also participate in or provide suggestions for reparation. The presence of the victim also ensures that the offender is aware of who has been harmed and how the crime has affected the victim. There is an opportunity to make amends face-to-face in a "safe" environment. Both offenders and victims are encouraged to bring a support person to the conference and community representatives will also participate.

Outcomes

The outcome of the conference is often a written agreement signed by the victim and the offender. During the conference, the participants will have talked about the harm that was caused by the crime and what it will take to repair the harm. The actions that were discussed will be agreed on and written out in detail. Agreements may involve a variety of practical solutions to the problem. Research shows that 90% of restorative justice conferences result in agreements. Because they involve a collective response to the problem, conference agreements tend to increase the support provided by the local community where people are affected by the crime.