

Safeguarding Factsheet 9: Restorative Justice

The basics

Restorative justice is widely recognised as a process of repairing harm caused by conflict or a crime being committed. This approach views crime as a violation of people, relationships and of the wider community, not simply an offence against the state.

Restorative justice provides a forum for victims to ask questions and receive answers, gain understanding, explain the impact of the crime on them, and, in some cases, contribute to the outcome of the process. This may result in the victim receiving an apology or requesting a form of reparation.

Offenders are encouraged to take responsibility for their harmful behaviour in a meaningful way, to gain insight into the causes and effects of that behaviour on others and to make a positive change.

The benefits

Many victims feel that the criminal justice system does not give them a chance to get involved. Restorative justice puts victims at the heart of the justice process – it gives them a chance to ask the offender any questions that they have and get anything that they may want to say about the impact of the crime off their chest.

Restorative justice is shown nationally to achieve a high satisfaction rate for victims that have engaged with the process as well as contributing to a positive behavioural change in those causing harm, thus leading to a reduced number of first time offenders and a reduction in re-offending.

Effects on victims

85% satisfaction rate with face-to-face RJ conferencing

78% would recommend RJ conferencing to others

RJ conferences led to 49% fewer cases of victims with clinical levels of post-traumatic stress symptoms

There were 36% fewer symptoms of post-traumatic stress in general

62% of victims in the UK studies said that RJ had made them feel better

A greater proportion of RJ victims said that they felt more secure after their case had been dealt with compared to victims who experienced the court process only.

Only 5% of RJ victims believed that their offender would commit the same offence against them

RJ provided 72% of victims with some degree of closure, thus enabling them to move on from the offence

'face to face interaction and getting to know what the other party is like' has been shown to bring strong benefits to victims of crime where they are willing to engage in RJ

Effects on re-offending

7% to 45% fewer repeat offences over the two years following RJ conference

22% fewer convictions following a RJ conference

More Information

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