

RJCO QUARTERLY



RESTORATIVE JUSTICE NEWS FOR PRACTITIONERS



Photo Credit: Chris Kane

A word from Simon Fulford, RJCO's new president.

As I start my tenure as RJCO President I am moved to reflect. These are exciting times and challenging times. Oregon's Legislature is about to start its short session with bills and debates ranging from carbon trading to the child welfare crisis and implementing SB 1008 sentencing reforms. Two Metro-area District Attorney races will be on the May ballot while nationally, the Senate Impeachment Trial is starting just as I write this. I hear a lot of words these days: fear, hope, misunderstanding, conflict, equity... RJCO strongly believes that restorative justice has a key role to play in addressing harm and injustice between individuals, in our communities and across our society. The Coordinating Committee will be reflecting on and incorporating as much of this as possible at our strategic planning retreat in February. I invite the broader RJ community to do the same as we take our collective work forward in the year ahead.

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WINTER 2020

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It's time to start really listening to crime victims and survivors.

We asked Multnomah District Attorney candidate Mike Schmidt to share his thoughts on restorative justice in the criminal justice system

BY MIKE SCHMIDT

An elected DA once told me they tell families of homicide victims to “find salvation in your therapist or your church or your family, because you aren’t going to find it in the courtroom.” Decoupling punishment and healing in our criminal justice system is important. And while I respect the bluntness of that DA’s advice, I think we owe victims more than a reality check about what happens in most courtrooms.

As Danielle Sered beautifully describes in her book *Until We Reckon*, most survivors are led to believe the only option they have for healing is seeing the punishment of the person that hurt them.

Prosecutors need to start having a new set of conversations with victims and survivors to reset expectations. It’s time we stop telling victims what we think will heal them, and actively listen to what victims and survivors say they need to heal. When I was a deputy DA in Multnomah county, I heard from victims of crime who were all over the spectrum in what type of result they wanted to

see from the justice system. 2020.

Some wanted a punitive response. Others wanted to ensure that the offender never commits a crime again. Some victims and survivors I spoke with just wanted to be made whole and be able to move on with their lives. Many had questions for the person who hurt them, like “why me?” or “Why did you do this?”

It always bothered me that our criminal justice system was not built to get victims the answers they seek. Sadly, ten years after I started having these conversations, this part of our system still hasn’t been fixed. The only thing we offer victims of crime is separation from and punishment of the person who harmed them.

It’s time for the Multnomah County District Attorney and prosecutors across the country to consider restorative justice programs for crime victims when they decide they want to participate. Offering survivors more than the binary “punishment or nothing” and instead considering how we can reorient the system to seriously consider “what do you need to heal?” should be a major priority.

I intend to make restorative justice for victims and survivors a central part of reforming criminal justice in Multnomah County if I am elected DA in

Why?

Because helping victims heal is the right thing to do. But that’s not all.

Extensive research shows that when victims are offered more options their satisfaction with our justice system goes up. That helps drive the public’s view on legitimacy and increase confidence. That’s something our criminal justice system is sorely in need of at this point in history.

When the justice system is seen as illegitimate and unresponsive, when we talk at victims and survivors instead of really listening to what they need to heal - and when we don’t give victims and offenders more meaningful opportunities to engage - it allows violence in our community to continue unabated. That makes all of us less safe, and ultimately creates more victims.

It’s time to take healing survivors seriously. We need to stop pretending the only thing we can offer is punishment or nothing.

It’s the smart thing to do. It’s the right thing to do. And it will make our justice system serve all the people of Multnomah County better.



Community Circles & RJ Practices in Residential Treatment Settings

BY SIMON FULFORD
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR,
PARROTT CREEK



For over fifty years, Parrott Creek Child & Family Services has been providing residential treatment for children and teenagers involved in the juvenile justice and child welfare systems. Over the years our approach has evolved from the 1960s "Boys Ranch" models to incorporating Dialectical Behavior Therapy (DBT), Collaborative Problem Solving and social-emotional skill building. Twenty years ago we started applying restorative principles in our residential community, which has grown to include mindfulness practice and other trauma-informed approaches. On a daily basis, we weave together the use of restorative or community circles with mindfulness and self-awareness with the ultimate aim of helping our kids transition back to loving families in the community.

Given that a residential program is a discreet community of its own, circle processes are an

excellent tool, or practice, that enables youth and staff to discuss issues on a daily basis. Through this process they work towards being able to talk honestly about successes for the community and any issues that may have arisen during the day. Community Circles are solution-focused and use a restorative justice perspective to hold each other accountable and repair any harm that has happened in the community. The Community Circle is also used to welcome new youth into the program and explain the community's guidelines and expectations. Staff and youth also use this process to express hopes for youth when they are leaving to go home or back in to society at large.

Another way we apply restorative principles is through our weekly Validation & Accountability Group. Using a talking piece chosen by the youth, this group is another "circle process" where youth's experiences, thoughts and feelings are able to be expressed and validated while they also learn to take true accountability for their past and present actions.

The validity part of the group is where youth receive support and encouragement from their peers for actions taken, or choices they made, that had positive outcomes for themselves or those around them.

By true accountability we mean not just admitting one's culpability for something, but empowering oneself through understanding that, regardless of outside influences, mal-

treatment, or consequences, at certain points one makes choices whether conscious of them or not. With that difficult but empowering understanding, youth can choose to make different choices in the future regardless of the other challenges they face.

The Validation & Accountability Group is broken up into two parts. First each member of the group is asked to either seek validation or take accountability for a recent action and to receive feedback from their peers and the facilitator. Then the facilitator will use an example, either from that day or a prearranged subject, to engage the whole group in processing the ramifications of the issue or challenge being discussed for their personal lives and the community at large.

Combined with DBT and social-emotional skill-building groups, Parrott Creek has found that the application of a restorative process, grounded in trauma-informed, mindful practice, can be extremely effective in helping move youth from the roles of victims to positive agents of change in their lives. Our most recent data shows that almost 70% of our youth make progress in their treatment goals with over one-third making significant progress before they leave the Parrott Creek community.

Telling the Story of Restorative Dialogues in Oregon

By Jillian Kellington

The Restorative Dialogue and Victim-Offender Dialogue Programs throughout the state of Oregon have been growing rapidly! In an effort to tell a broader statewide story about the effectiveness of these programs, a team gathered diligently over the course of two years to work toward aligning their programs' pre- and post-surveys. This team was comprised of folks from Clackamas County Juvenile Department, Multnomah County Juvenile Department, Beaverton Center for Mediation and Dialogue, Resolutions NW, and Resolve in Southern Oregon among other volunteer facilitators and mediators.

The process proved to be quite the undertaking! Before diving into the development of the new surveys, the team spent a considerable amount of time assessing and formulating the goals and hoped-for outcomes of the dialogue process. Guided by restorative values and principles, the team listed the outcomes they hoped would be achieved in the dialogue process for each stakeholder group: the person who was harmed, the person who caused harm, and the community. For example, the team hoped the person who was harmed would leave the dialogue process feeling that their impacts had been heard and addressed; the person who caused harm would feel they had the opportunity to take accountability and work towards repairing the harm; the community would be strengthened; and so on.

Once the list of goals was established, the team examined each individual question on the existing surveys being utilized by Clackamas and Multnomah counties. After many months of revising, removing, and adding new questions, the team had a final draft which was piloted for 6 months in the various programs throughout the state. The team reconvened at the conclusion of the pilot, made some minor adjustments, and were ready to officially launch the new surveys.

Several folks in Southern Oregon created a database where each participating county or agency can capture their survey responses with the goal of one day pooling all the data together. This will tell a much bigger story about Restorative Dialogue programs in Oregon

EVENTS

RJ for Personal Development

Resolutions Northwest

February, 3 2020 9:00 am, Portland

Learn how to build relationships and show up authentically in the spaces we occupy while being aware of the impacts that our presence can carry.

Register [here](#)

Advanced Circles and Community Building

Resolutions Northwest

February, 4 2020 9:00 am, Portland

This training is designed to help you build skills for facilitating community building circles and beyond.

Register [here](#)

Restorative Justice Facilitator Training

RESOLVE

February 19, 20, 26, & 27 2020, Medford

Register [here](#)

This 4-day training prepares participants to identify and respond to the needs of all affected, facilitate community building and restorative interventions, and integrate restorative justice practices into daily interactions and organizational cultures.

RJ Facilitator Training

Center for Dialogue and Resolution

April 23, 24, 25 2020 8:30-5:30

Eugene, OR

Two and three day options, covering criminal justice and education contexts.

Register [here](#) or [email](#) for more info

IN THE NEWS

Minnesota restorative justice leader sees this method as best opportunity to heal trauma

Restorative justice comes to Arlington - a better way to deal with crime

Restorative justice in Mennonite schools



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