



Call to Justice: “JusticeGram” of the Salvatorian Family USA

Restorative Practices

Volume 4 Issue 2
Summer 2023

Building Relationships, Resolving Conflict, and Repairing Harm

Restorative practices are a set of principles and tools that can be used to build relationships, resolve conflict, and repair harm. They are based on the belief that everyone has something to contribute to the solution, and that the goal is to restore or create a state of peace, justice, and harmony in the community or social group. The term **restorative justice** is often used as a synonym but actually refers to using restorative practices to resolve harm caused by a crime, including developing a written plan to repair the harm. Restorative practices include a broader set of tools and techniques, or a philosophy of action. They can be used to build relationships, resolve

At our recent National Assembly, our keynote speaker, Mary Novak from NETWORK Lobby for Catholic Social Justice (<https://networklobby.org/>) offered insights and examples of ways “peace-building” and restorative practices are relevant to Salvatorian life and ministries, now and into the future.

conflict, and repair harm. Restorative practices can be used in conjunction with restorative justice, or they can be used on their own.

Restorative practices can be used in a variety of settings, including schools, workplaces, and families. In a school setting, restorative practices might be used to prevent and resolve conflicts between students, or to address behavior problems. In a workplace setting, restorative practices might be used to build a healthy workplace culture, to resolve conflicts between employees, or to address workplace bullying. In a family setting, restorative practices might be used to strengthen family relationships, resolve conflicts between family members, or to address family problems.



**CATHOLIC
MOBILIZING
NETWORK**

As Catholics, restorative processes invite us to live out the principles of Catholic social teaching and to model Jesus' reconciling way.

<https://catholicmobilizing.org/restorative-justice>

Some of the most common restorative practices include:

Talking circles: Talking circles are a way for people to come together and share their thoughts and feelings about a conflict. They can be used to build understanding and empathy, and to find solutions that everyone can agree on.



Conferencing: Conferencing is a more formal way of resolving conflict. It involves the people who have been affected by the conflict, as well as a facilitator who helps guide the conversation. The goal of conferencing is to reach a mutually agreed-upon resolution.

Reparations: Reparations are actions that are taken to repair the harm that has been caused by a conflict. They can be symbolic or practical, and they can be designed to restore the relationship between the people who have been affected by the conflict.

Let Us Pray:

- ◇ open our hearts and ears to listen to both sides in a conflict.
- ◇ ... help us use our power to increase the ways our judicial system uses restorative justice for both the victim and the offender.
- ◇ ... that the Catholic Church use restorative justice practices when appropriate.
- ◇ ... that we, as Salvatorians, discover ways restorative practices can help us to more effectively bring the goodness and kindness of our Savior to others.

Restorative practices can be a powerful way to build relationships, resolve conflict, and repair harm. They are a valuable tool for creating more positive and supportive communities. To incorporate restorative practices into your daily life, you can:

- * Talk to your friends and family about restorative practices. The more people who know about restorative practices, the more likely they are to use them.
- * Be mindful of your language. When you are talking about conflict, try to use language that is respectful and inclusive.
- * Be willing to listen to others. When others are sharing their thoughts and feelings about a conflict, try to listen without judgment.

- * If you have caused harm to someone, be willing to apologize and make amends.
- * If someone has caused you harm, be willing to forgive them and move on.
- * Accept that the other party does not need to forgive, but is more likely to do so once harms are repaired and relationships are healed.

MYTH vs. REALITY	
<p>Restorative Justice is “soft” on offenders</p> 	<p>Offenders consistently report it is much harder to sit face to face with someone they hurt and have to listen to all the ways their choices impacted someone than it is to sit and face a judge</p>
<p>Victims will be re-traumatized if they are face to face with the offender</p>	<p>Victims report very high satisfaction rates with RJ because they are in charge, their voices are heard and it is very safe for them, physically and emotionally</p> 
<p>Restorative Justice lets offenders get away with committing a crime</p> 	<p>Victims and offenders decide together what it will take to repair the harm caused by the offender so the consequences the offender faces are more meaningful to the victim than just a fine or jail time</p>

https://www.comjustice.org/uploads/1/1/7/4/117440886/myths-vs-reality_1.png

Restorative practices can be used in almost any situation of disagreement, conflict, or harm. By taking time to reflect upon and then share responses to these questions, all parties to a conflict have a voice in creating a plan that will make things right.

When things go wrong:

For the one who was harmed:

- ▶ What happened?
- ▶ What were you thinking of at the time?
- ▶ What have you thought about since?
- ▶ Who has been affected by what you have done?
- ▶ In what way have they been affected?
- ▶ What do you think you need to do to make things right?

- ▶ What did you think when you realized what had happened?
- ▶ What impact has this incident had on you and others?
- ▶ What has been the hardest thing for you?
- ▶ What do you think needs to happen to make things right?

International Institute for Restorative Practices <https://www.iirp.edu/>

Off the Hook?

Restorative justice focuses less on punishment and more on creating or strengthening relationships. A key component is “making amends” or “healing the harms” of the conflict. Harms accrue to the victim and also to the broader community. Restorative justice addresses both.

The victim has a voice in the process and identifies specific ways the perpetrator can make amends. This is not typical in retributive justice, where the victim might not even have a chance to address the perpetrator since lawyer-to-lawyer interactions are the focal point.

Restorative justice is clear: perpetrators are responsible for their actions and are responsible for making amends. In criminal cases, making amends could still include prison time or other types of sentencing. In civil cases, making

amends could still include paying a fine or funding counseling or therapy for the victim.

When victims have a voice in what actions will lead to their healing, it’s often neither dollars nor criminal punishment that form the focus for healing the harms. When restorative justice processes are properly facilitated, victims are able to discern what will be most helpful in their healing. Perpetrators make amends that are meaningful to both the victim and the rest of the community. Perpetrators do not get “off the hook.” Reparation and restitution repair and restore the victim while also addressing the wounds in the community caused by the perpetrator’s actions. The goal is not to punish but to repair the harm.

Contributors for This Issue

Jackie White, SDS
Sr. Ellen Sinclair, SDS
Sr. Patrice Colletti, SDS
Sr. Jean Schafer, SDS

Learn More

Restorative Justice– What you need to know <https://youtu.be/KLPZy2wW-x8>

What is Restorative Justice? <https://youtu.be/ZfQhfN6PxPI>

Restorative Justice and Catholic Communities <https://catholicmobilizing.org/guide/paths-renewed-encounter>

Peacemaking Circle <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L6stLLU5VTA>

Restorative Practices Continuum <https://youtu.be/nRwtbR0zX1k>