

Facts and Figures

79%

Reported victim satisfaction through restorative justice programs. Traditional justice delivers only a 57% victim satisfaction rate.¹

95%

The number of Restorative Justice community conferences in Baltimore that have resulted in a written agreement between all parties. These agreements boast a 95% compliance rate²

18,000

The number of Baltimore residents who have resolved their own crimes and conflicts through Restorative Justice practices³

80%

Percentage of participants involved in crimes of violence who reported that Restorative Justice had a profound effect on their lives⁴

In many ways, trauma distills down to powerlessness, which means that the opposite of trauma isn't help. The opposite of trauma is power.

Danielle Sered, Director of Common Justice Brooklyn ("Explained," 2021)

Goals and Best Practices in Other States⁵

To Mandate Availability and Disclosure Of Programs

New Hampshire and Texas law both include explicit statutes establishing the right crime victims to request a victim-offender dialogue. They also include a mandate for these services to be provided by the respective departments of public safety. Maryland victims and offenders deserve this same level of access to programs.

To Allow For Non-Government Organizations To Provide Vital Services

There are various mediation groups that provide victim-offender dialogue services. These groups must be supported and funded in ways that expand their services to all citizens of Maryland. Minnesota, one of the 11 states that have post-sentencing Restorative Justice programs, has established this practice in statute. Our legislation will establish a Restorative Justice Legal Specialist to oversee these qualified providers.

To Establish Voluntary Participation and Confidentiality

Restorative Justice services may be requested by either victims or offenders under proposed legislation. Neither party may be penalized if they decline to participate. Information shared during the process may not be used as evidence or to bring any adverse action against either party in court proceedings. New Hampshire has guaranteed confidentiality in their Restorative Justice statute.

To Generate And Designate Funding Sources

Arizona and Montana both have programs that provide avenues for providing funding and seeking federal funds for programs. Maryland's 2016 Justice Reinvestment Act explicitly allows grant money to be appropriated to Restorative Justice.

1. Communities for Restorative Justice. Success Data. of Justice Statistics. <https://www.c4rj.org/what-is-restorative-justice/success-data>

2. Restorative Response Baltimore. The Impact of Community Conferencing. <https://www.restorativeresponse.org/impact-of-community-conferencing/>.

3. <https://www.restorativeresponse.org/impact-of-community-conferencing/>.

4. Charter for Compassion: Facts and History. <https://charterforcompassion.org/restorative-justice/restorative-justice-some-facts-and-history>

5. Statute references and additional materials available upon request.

Restorative Justice Initiative

Restorative Justice Heals Our Communities Choose To Invest In Victim Satisfaction And Offender Rehabilitation

People respond in accordance to how you relate to them. If you approach them on the basis of violence, that's how they will react. But if you say, we want peace, we want stability, we can then do a lot of things that will contribute towards the progress of our society

President Nelson Mandela

What Is Restorative Justice?

- Restorative Justice is a theory of justice that emphasizes repairing the harm caused by criminal behavior.¹
Focuses on repairing the harm caused by the crime.
- Identifies the parties responsible for causing harm and focuses on how that harm can be repaired rather than shaming and dehumanizing the offender
- Engages both victims and offenders in the justice process, leading to more satisfaction and empowerment of both parties.²

Does it Work?

- There are already many Restorative Justice organizations in Maryland. These programs have been highly effective and should be available to all victims and offenders in Maryland.
- The cost of providing Restorative Justice programs is offset up to eight times by the savings created by significantly reduced recidivism rates and the cost of future crimes.³
- The probability of re-arrest is reduced by 13% for those who participate in continued community re-entry restorative justice mediation.
- The probability of returning to prison is reduced by 12% by community re-entry restorative justice mediation.
- Restorative Justice Mediation improves recidivism rates regardless of crime. Studies show that participating in the process is valuable regardless of specific conviction.⁴

"Denise describes the Serious Crimes Conference as 'an awesome experience' that freed and released her. Denise told Wanda that when her parole hearing is scheduled, that Denise will not only speak on Wanda's behalf, but she will also let the Parole Commission know she supports her release from prison.

Testimonial from Restorative Response Baltimore regarding a conference between an offender and the victim's daughter.

In Maryland, the only contact between victim and offender occurs at sentencing, when the victim describes to a judge, not to the offender, the impact of the crime. The offender can express remorse only with his or her back to the victim and only in the context of seeking a favorable sentence.

Jane C. Murphy, "Restorative justice: healing victims and reducing crime." Baltimore Sun, 2018

Restorative justice may even have a deeper healing impact on serious offenders than on others. It also carries greater significance for the community when violent offences are involved. Contrary to assumptions that are often made, a restorative justice process can be quite effective in cases involving serious offences or even offenders entrenched in patterns of serious crime. It can be successfully applied when the offender and victims previously had some form of relationship with each other, even when violence is involved

*International Center for Criminal Law Reform*⁵

1. Center for Justice and Reconciliation. Lesson 1: What is Restorative Justice?

<http://restorativejustice.org/restorative-justice/about-restorative-justice/tutorial-intro-to-restorative-justice/lesson-1-what-is-restorative-justice/>

2. Zehr, Howard. *Restorative Justice: Principles and Values, an Overview*. <https://zehr-institute.org/docs/Howard-Zehr.pdf>

3. Sherman, Lawrence W. "Are Restorative Justice Conferences Effective in Reducing Repeat Offending? Findings from a Campbell Systematic Review," *Journal of Quantitative Criminology* (2015). <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/S10940-014-9222-9>.

4. Community Mediation Maryland Evaluation Results. <https://re-entrymediation.org/evaluation-results/>.

5. International Center for Criminal Law Reform and Criminal Justice Policy. "Restorative Justice in Matters Involving Serious Crime."

<https://icclr.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/Restorative-Justice-Note-4-Restorative-Justice-in-Matters-Involving-Serious-Crimes.pdf?x21689>