

The Advocacy Foundation, Inc.

Preparing Individuals, Organizations and Communities to Achieve Their Full Potential



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Restorative Justice in America

Part III of III—Examples | Best Practices | Victim-Centered Solutions

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Zachariah 8: 1-8

The Coming Peace and Prosperity of Zion (NASB)

Then the word of the LORD of hosts came, saying, ²“Thus says the LORD of hosts, ‘I am exceedingly jealous for Zion, yes, with great wrath I am jealous for her.’ ³Thus says the LORD, ‘I will return to Zion and will dwell in the midst of Jerusalem. Then Jerusalem will be called the City of Truth, and the mountain of the LORD of hosts will be called the Holy Mountain.’ ⁴Thus says the LORD of hosts, ‘Old men and old women will again sit in the streets of Jerusalem, each man with his staff in his hand because of age. ⁵And the streets of the city will be filled with boys and girls playing in its streets.’ ⁶Thus says the LORD of hosts, ‘If it is too difficult in the sight of the remnant of this people in those days, will it also be too difficult in My sight?’ declares the LORD of hosts. ⁷Thus says the LORD of hosts, ‘Behold, I am going to save My people from the land of the east and from the land of the west; ⁸and I will bring them back and they will live in the midst of Jerusalem; and they shall be My people, and I will be their God in truth and righteousness.’”

Specific Examples of Restorative Justice Forums

There are several different types of Restorative Justice Forums. They include, but are by no means limited to:

- (1) Victim-Offender Reconciliation;
- (2) Family Group Conferencing;
- (3) Restorative Conferencing;
- (4) Community Restorative Boards;
- (5) Restorative Circles & Restorative Systems;
- (6) Circles of Support & Accountability; and
- (7) Sentencing Circles.

The most noteworthy of the above forums is the Circles of Support and Accountability (CoSA), due to its extremely high success rate of non-recidivism. *This approach has [even] demonstrated the capacity to enhance the safe integration of otherwise high-risk sex offenders with their community.*

Some countries judge certain sex offenders too dangerous for any form of conditional release, "detaining" them until they serve their entire sentence. A subsequent conviction often leads to designation as a "Dangerous Offender". Prior to 1994 many such offenders were released without any support or observation beyond police surveillance. Between 1994 and 2007, CoSA assisted with the integration of well over 120 such offenders. *Research indicated that surrounding a 'core member' with 5-7 trained volunteer circle members reduced recidivism by nearly 80%.* Further, recidivist offences were less invasive and less brutal than without the program.

* excerpts from www.wikipedia.com

Best Practices

Circles of Support and Accountability (CoSA) originated as a project of the "Welcome In", a Mennonite church in Hamilton, Ontario (Canada). *This approach has demonstrated, [among other things], the capacity to enhance the safe integration of otherwise high-risk sex offenders with their communities.* Prior to 1994 many such offenders were released without any support or observation beyond police surveillance. *Research indicated that surrounding a 'core member' with 5-7 trained volunteer circle members reduced recidivism by nearly 80%.* [Moreover], further recidivist offences were less invasive and less brutal than without the program.

Victim-Centered Solutions

Forgiveness As A Tool

The use of forgiveness as a tool has in the restorative justice programs, run for victims and perpetrators of **Rwandan genocide**, the violence in **Israeli-Palestinian conflict**, and **North-ern Ireland conflict**, has also been documented in film, ***Beyond Right and Wrong: Stories of Justice and Forgiveness*** (2012).

In July 2011, the **International Center for Transitional Justice** published a report entitled "To Live as Other Kenyans do: A Study of the Demands of Kenyan Victims of Human Rights Violations". The findings are based on individual and group interviews of victims of human rights abuses from Kenya's 2007 post-election violence. It highlights the importance of a victim-centered approach to determine the most effective mode of implementation for a comprehensive reparations program.

Public Awareness

A recent increased public awareness of alternatives to the classic prison system has created a *favorable social climate for the growth of restorative justice* in the public domain.

The growth of the victim identity and victimization of our society has created satisfactory conditions for public acceptance of the ideas of restorative justice, especially through mass media.

Studies have shown that the general public would be open to the idea of alternative forms of justice only after the idea has been explicitly explained to them.

Always feel welcome to contact me directly with any questions, comments, or great ideas!

Jack Johnson

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ADVOCACY
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*Helping Individuals, Organizations & Communities
Achieve Their Full Potential*

Our Mission

The Mission of The Advocacy Foundation
is Threefold:

To Rescue

Young persons from the prison pipeline
and help redirect and restore their lives;

To Teach

New and fledgling nonprofit organizations to become
fundable, to thrive, and to maintain compliance;

To Train

Qualified Juvenile Justice Professionals with a passion
for effective careers in the Juvenile Justice system.

PREPAR
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TENTIAL