

Our Turn To Learn...About Working Together for Juveniles



# Making Restorative Real

Kris Miner

Friday, September 29, 2006  
8:30 am

# **Making Restorative Real – How to Really Engage Victims, Offenders and Community**

**Kris Miner, Coordinator St Croix Valley Restorative Justice Program**

Participants will leave the session with new ideas on implementing restorative justice philosophy. Refresh your perspective on a 25 year-old practice and learn how to evaluate your programs 'real restorative' qualities. No role-plays, but an engaging workshop designed to energize even the most seasoned workers!

**Kris Miner** is the Coordinator of the St Croix Valley Restorative Justice Program and an Independent Consultant. She has worked in juvenile justice in a variety of roles ranging from in-home family therapist to juvenile justice unit supervisor. Ms. Miner is a restorative justice facilitator and trainer. She has presented at numerous conferences, workshops and trainings.

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## RESTORATIVE JUSTICE PRINCIPLES

1. Restorative justice is a way of thinking and responding to conflicts, disputes, or offenses. Restorative justice concerns making things as right as possible for all people.
2. Restorative justice recognizes that response to conflicts, disputes or offenses is important. Restorative justice responds in ways that build safe and healthy communities.
3. Restorative justice is not permissive. Restorative justice prefers to deal cooperatively and constructively with conflicts, disputes and offenses at the earliest possible time and before they escalate.
4. Restorative justice recognizes that violations of rules and laws are also indicators of transgressions and offenses against persons, relationships, and community.
5. Restorative justice addresses the harms and needs created by, and related to, conflicts, disputes and offenses.
6. Restorative justice holds disputants and offenders accountable to recognize harm, repair damages as much as possible, and creates a civil future.
7. Restorative justice empowers victims, disputants, offenders and their communities to assume central roles in recognizing harm, repairing damages, and creating a safe and civil future.
8. Restorative justice repairs the breach and reintegrates the victim, disputant, offender and their community as much as possible.
9. Restorative justice prefers maximum use of voluntary and cooperative response options and minimum use of force and coercion.

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10. Restorative justice authorities provide oversight, assistance, and coercive backup when individuals are not cooperative.
  11. Restorative justice is measured by its outcomes, not just its intentions. Do victims emerge from the restorative justice response feeling respected and safe? Are participants motivated and empowered to live constructive and civil lives? Are they living in the community in a way that demonstrates an acceptable balance of freedom and responsibility? Are responses by authorities, community, and individuals respectful, reasonable, and restorative for everyone?
  12. Restorative justice recognizes and encourages the role of community organizations, including the education and faith communities, in teaching and establishing the moral and ethical standards that build up the community.

## **We are working toward restorative justice when we...**

...focus on the *harms* of wrongdoing more than the rules that have been broken,

...show equal concern and commitment to *victims and offenders*, involving both in the process of justice,

...work toward the restoration of victims, empowering them and responding to their needs as they see them,

...support *offenders* while encouraging them to understand, accept and carry out their obligations,

...recognize that while *obligations* may be difficult for offenders, they should not be intended as harms and they must be achievable,

...provide opportunities for *dialogue*, direct or indirect, between victims and offenders as appropriate,

...involve and empower the affected *community* through the justice process, and increase its capacity to recognize and respond to crime

...encourage *collaboration and reintegration* rather than coercion and isolation,

...give attention to the *unintended consequences* of our actions

...show *respect* to all parties including victims, offenders & the community

## **Crime wounds ... justice heals**

-Harry Mika and Howard Zehr

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Restorative Justice Program**

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## **CIRCLES: USE OF THE TALKING STICK, FEATHER, ROCK**

Generally, a piece which has particular meaning to the community, is used as the talking piece passed to facilitate and share speaking time in the circle.

### **General Guidelines:**

- The talking piece always moves clockwise around the circle.
- One cannot speak unless holding the talking piece, except with permission of the Circle Keeper.
- When the talking piece comes to a person s/he can pass it without speaking.
- One cannot "dump and run": speak and then leave the circle before it is done.
- The talking piece gets passed around and around until everyone has had their say, and no decision is made until then.

### **Honoring the Circle:**

When holding the talking piece one must honor the purpose of the circle and those in it by speaking:

- from the heart, honestly and openly.
- with respect for others.
- briefly enough that everyone will have time to speak.
- to the issues in the circle.

### **The advantages of using a talking piece include:**

- greater opportunity for listening and reflection: since a person has to wait for the talking piece to come around before speaking there is more focus on what people are saying than on preparing an immediate response.
- prevention of one on one debates since people cannot respond out of turn.
- shared responsibility -- for the discussion and for the peacemaking -- among all the circle members. Use of a talking piece reinforces the principle of equality in the circle: equal opportunity for all to participate and equal capacity of all to contribute.
- more opportunity for quiet people to be heard in the discussion; the talking piece gives them time to speak without having to compete with the more verbal people.
- promotion of consensus: all people are heard from and all issues are aired before any decision is made by the circle.

Once the talking piece goes around the circle and comes back to the Keeper of the Circle, the Keeper may: summarize what people have been saying and raise potential questions to address before passing the talking piece around again; summarize what people have been saying and hold the talking piece to open up the circle for anyone to speak; hold the talking piece and call on specific people to clarify certain issues; or pass the talking piece to someone else to facilitate an open circle discussion on a key issue.

Minnesota Department of Corrections Restorative Justice Initiative - 9/98. Excerpted in part, with permission, from Building Community Justice Partnerships: Community Peacemaking Circles, by Barry Stuart (1997: Aboriginal Justice Learning Network, Department of Justice, Canada.)



## St. Croix Valley Restorative Justice Program

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To: \_\_\_\_\_

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This letter is being sent to you/your child to coordinate participation in a **Victim Empathy Seminar**. The Courts or your probation officer has provided me with your contact information and required your attendance. I will be facilitating the Seminar, my name is Kris Miner, I look forward to working with you in a respectful manner.

The Seminar you are scheduled to attend is on \_\_\_\_\_ from \_\_\_\_\_ We will start on time, please be prompt.

The Seminar will be held at the Restorative Justice Center, 215 N 2<sup>nd</sup> Street in River Falls, across from the Post Office. The cost is \$30.00, and in juvenile cases, a parent must also attend.

Restorative Justice is a process that focuses on repairing harm and strengthening community. At the Seminar storytelling will be used as part of the learning process, a Victim will be speaking to the group. Participants will also be identifying who was harmed and with the assistance of community members identify what can be done to repair that harm. Letters of apology will be drafted in small groups. This is an opportunity to help resolve issues from a specific incident.

If you have any additional questions, please contact me directly. My contact information is provided at the top of this letter.

Also enclosed is a participation agreement, please bring this along to the Seminar.

Kris Miner

**Victim Empathy Seminar  
St Croix Valley Restorative Justice Program  
Participation Agreement**

The VICTM EMPATHY SEMINAR is an educational seminar designed to address the delinquent act committed by the juvenile offender, determine how the victims may have been affected, explore various ways to repair the harm, and complete a Letter of Apology.

**We agree to participate and abide by the following participation agreement:**

1. We agree the information discussed at this Seminar will be held in the strictest confidence, to the extent permitted by law, by all participants and the facilitator. If any of the parties involved reveal during the seminar that they are going to violate the law or place someone or themselves in harm or danger - the facilitator must report the information to the proper authorities.
2. We acknowledge that interruptions, profanity, insults and/or other disrespectful behavior toward another person are not permitted.
3. We will participate in all program requirements. This includes, but is not limited to, full participation in the seminar and completing all assigned tasks.
4. We agree to comply with any rules that were developed by our Seminar group before the Seminar starts.
5. The Restorative Justice Program will maintain records of level of participation in the program and will advise the referral source accordingly.
6. We agree not to hold SCVRJP, its employees, agents or representatives responsible for any claims which may arise from this program and we agree to hold them harmless from such claims except willful acts causing injury.

**We understand the above information and have had a chance to ask any questions regarding this agreement and the Victim Empathy Seminar.**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Juvenile

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

**SCVRJP  
Program Coordinator  
Kris Miner 715.220.5658**



## St. Croix Valley Restorative Justice Program

### Youth Survey – **BEFORE** - Seminar

Please answer the following questions as honestly as you can. Please answer these questions based upon the incident that your child was referred to this seminar for. Thank you.

*Please circle the number corresponding to your response for the following questions.*

	Yes, definitely 4	Yes, most of the time 3	No, not really 2	No, definitely not 1
I think this seminar will be helpful to me . . . . .	4	3	2	1
My behavior was wrong. . . . .	4	3	2	1
I feel sorry for what I did. . . . .	4	3	2	1
Others were harmed as a result of my offense. . . . .	4	3	2	1
I think it is important to make things right with those I harmed. . . . .	4	3	2	1

Additional Comments:



## St. Croix Valley Restorative Justice Program

### Impact of Offense Sheet

**What I did and how I feel about it after hearing the speaker:**

**Who was impacted by my crime (physically, emotionally, materials) directly and indirectly, what harm I caused:**

**Things I can do to repair the harm, or make things right:**



## St. Croix Valley Restorative Justice Program

### Apology Letter Evaluation

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

What he/she did and how they feel about it?	___ Yes	___ No
Stated who was impacted by this crime, harm created?	___ Yes	___ No
State what he/she learned through this experience?	___ Yes	___ No
Is a way to repair harm identified?	___ Yes	___ No
Does it sound honest?	___ Yes	___ No
Is this an acceptable letter of apology?	___ Yes	___ No

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

What he/she did and how they feel about it?	___ Yes	___ No
Stated who was impacted by this crime, harm created?	___ Yes	___ No
State what he/she learned through this experience?	___ Yes	___ No
Is a way to repair harm identified?	___ Yes	___ No
Does it sound honest?	___ Yes	___ No
Is this an acceptable letter of apology?	___ Yes	___ No

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

What he/she did and how they feel about it?	___ Yes	___ No
Stated who was impacted by this crime, harm created?	___ Yes	___ No
State what he/she learned through this experience?	___ Yes	___ No
Is a way to repair harm identified?	___ Yes	___ No
Does it sound honest?	___ Yes	___ No
Is this an acceptable letter of apology?	___ Yes	___ No

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

What he/she did and how they feel about it?	___ Yes	___ No
Stated who was impacted by this crime, harm created?	___ Yes	___ No
State what he/she learned through this experience?	___ Yes	___ No
Is a way to repair harm identified?	___ Yes	___ No
Does it sound honest?	___ Yes	___ No
Is this an acceptable letter of apology?	___ Yes	___ No

**St. Croix Valley Restorative Justice Program**  
**Victim Empathy Seminar**  
**Juvenile Offender Satisfaction Survey**

Facilitator: Kris Miner

We would greatly appreciate if you could take a few minutes to complete this questionnaire. Your comments and opinions are essential to our efforts of continuing to improve the equality of services we provide. Your identity and your responses are strictly confidential.

*Please circle the number corresponding to your response for the following questions.*

	Yes, definitely 4	Yes, most of the time 3	No, not really 2	No, definitely not 1
Has this agency been helpful to you?	4	3	2	1
Were you provided with clear information in a timely manner?	4	3	2	1
Do you feel this agency treated you with respect?	4	3	2	1
Did the service or information provided meet your expectations?	4	3	2	1
Was the agency sensitive to your cultural background?	4	3	2	1
Do you think this seminar was helpful to your community?	4	3	2	1
Do you think this seminar was helpful to you?	4	3	2	1
Did the facilitator treat you with respect?	4	3	2	1
Do you believe your behavior was wrong?	4	3	2	1
Do you feel sorry for what you did?	4	3	2	1
Do you believe others were harmed as a result of your offense?	4	3	2	1
Do you think it is important to make things right with those you have harmed?	4	3	2	1

What did you like best about this Seminar:

What did you like least about this Seminar:

Overall, how would you rate this agency?

Excellent \_\_\_\_ Good \_\_\_\_ Average \_\_\_\_ Poor \_\_\_\_

Comments or recommendations:

## CRIME SCENERIO

Bill is 25 years old. He is married to Maria and they have five-year-old twins, Thomas and Emily and a one-year-old baby. Today is the twin's birthday and they have a big party planned this afternoon with lots of friends and family. He does not get to see many of these people very often because of everyone's busy schedule, and he is looking forward to the party.

Bill works at *Electronic City*. He has been working there for about six months. Bill enjoys his job and feels that he is treated well by his employer. He is good at his job and he depends on his commission to support his family.

As Bill is nearing the end of his shift he is helping a customer pick out a stereo system. He has been working with this customer for the past two hours and the customer seems to be ready to make a very large purchase. Bill notices a young man at the end of the aisle with a slight bulge in his jacket. The boy looks nervous and Bill approaches him. The boy immediately starts to run towards the entrance of the store. While he is running, an expensive portable CD player falls out of the boy's coat and smashes on the ground. Bill alerts security and they stop the boy at the entrance of the store. The police are called and the boy is held there until the police arrive. While this is all going on, Bill's customer gets frustrated and leaves without buying the stereo.

Bill calls Maria to let her know that he will be a little late and she reminds him that he is supposed to pick up the birthday cake from the bakery on his way home. The police take both verbal and written statements from Bill and all the other witnesses and Bill fills out the incident report, required by *Electronic City*. When Bill is finally ready to leave, he realizes that he has missed most of his children's Birthday party and the bakery is now closed...

## CRIME SCENERIO

Nick's parents are out and his grandmother, who happens to be in the neighborhood, stops by for a visit. After her visit, when Nick walks her to her car they notice that the car window has been broken and his grandmother's purse has been taken.

Nick and his grandma call the police and start to make a list of all the things that were in her purse:

- Wallet
- License
- Glasses
- Money
- Pictures
- Credit Cards
- Make-up
- Check Book
- Medications
- Insurance Card
- Wedding Ring (that belonged to Nick's great-grandmother)
- Keys
- Address Book
- Social Security Check

Upon looking around the area Nick finds the pictures and insurance card torn up and lying in a mud puddle along with the empty wallet. He finds his grandma's glasses and medication lying in the middle of the street and they appear to have been run over by a car. Her make-up is strewn across the neighbors yard.

The police arrive in 30 minutes, but Nick's grandmother is too upset to talk to them, so they ask Nick some questions. They want to know the value of some of the items but Nick is unsure of this so he tries to help his grandmother figure out the values. This is obviously difficult for her.

While the police are asking questions both Nick's 7-year-old cousin and his next-door neighbor stop by. They had seen the police car in front of Nick's house. The neighbor says that he heard something earlier that could have been a window being broken, but did not check to see what it was.

## **Preparation Tips for Victim Speakers** (Drunk Driving Victims and Property Crime Victims)

### **DO**

- Tell about the crime itself (what happened, when, what was taken, who was injured or killed, etc.).
- Express how the crime has affected you (your marriage and family, friends, career, and life in general). It can be effective to describe a typical day now as contrasted with a typical day before the crime was committed.
- Use visual aids if they will enhance the telling of your story. Photos of your loved one before the death, the death certificate, or autopsy report can be placed in plastic covers and passed throughout the audience. Slide presentation photos of the victim beginning as a small child and ending with a photo having something to do with the crime are also very effective. Do not show death scene or morgue photos.
- Speak from the heart, and don't worry if you become emotional. Genuine emotion (never contrived) is a great communicator. If you need to stop for a few minutes to gain your composure, simply say so.

### **DON'T**

- Quote statistics
- Express your opinion about violent crime in general or the criminal or civil justice systems.
- Blame or accuse those in your audience.
- Express rage or anger UNLESS you are able to follow it up by saying that underneath it are sadness and sorrow and it sometimes gets expressed as anger.

Simply tell your story...in no more than 10-15 minutes. You will lose the audience's attention if you speak longer than that. Realize it may be harder to speak than write. Therefore, you might want to jot down a few notes in case you lose your train of thought. On the other hand, don't over-rehearse. Above all, don't read a prepared statement. After you've given the facts about the crime, talk about how you feel NOW-TODAY. Not yesterday or when it happened, but now. This will keep you relevant, fresh and poignant. It will also prevent you from giving the same presentation over and over again.

\*information taken from MADD Manual on Victim Panels

# 40 Developmental Assets™

Search Institute™ has identified the following building blocks of healthy development that help young people grow up healthy, caring, and responsible.



Category	Asset Name and Definition				
<b>External Assets</b>	<b>Support</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>1. Family Support</b>-Family life provides high levels of love and support.</li> <li><b>2. Positive Family Communication</b>-Young person and her or his parent(s) communicate positively, and young person is willing to seek advice and counsel from parents.</li> <li><b>3. Other Adult Relationships</b>-Young person receives support from three or more nonparent adults.</li> <li><b>4. Caring Neighborhood</b>-Young person experiences caring neighbors.</li> <li><b>5. Caring School Climate</b>-School provides a caring, encouraging environment.</li> <li><b>6. Parent Involvement in Schooling</b>-Parent(s) are actively involved in helping young person succeed in school.</li> </ol>				
	<b>Empowerment</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>7. Community Values Youth</b>-Young person perceives that adults in the community value youth.</li> <li><b>8. Youth as Resources</b>-Young people are given useful roles in the community.</li> <li><b>9. Service to Others</b>-Young person serves in the community one hour or more per week.</li> <li><b>10. Safety</b>-Young person feels safe at home, school, and in the neighborhood.</li> </ol>				
	<b>Boundaries &amp; Expectations</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>11. Family Boundaries</b>-Family has clear rules and consequences and monitors the young person's whereabouts.</li> <li><b>12. School Boundaries</b>-School provides clear rules and consequences.</li> <li><b>13. Neighborhood Boundaries</b>-Neighbors take responsibility for monitoring young people's behavior.</li> <li><b>14. Adult Role Models</b>-Parent(s) and other adults model positive, responsible behavior.</li> <li><b>15. Positive Peer Influence</b>-Young person's best friends model responsible behavior.</li> <li><b>16. High Expectations</b>-Both parent(s) and teachers encourage the young person to do well.</li> </ol>			
		<b>Constructive Use of Time</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>17. Creative Activities</b>-Young person spends three or more hours per week in lessons or practice in music, theater, or other arts.</li> <li><b>18. Youth Programs</b>-Young person spends three or more hours per week in sports, clubs, or organizations at school and/or in the community.</li> <li><b>19. Religious Community</b>-Young person spends one or more hours per week in activities in a religious institution.</li> <li><b>20. Time at Home</b>-Young person is out with friends "with nothing special to do" two or fewer nights per week.</li> </ol>		
			<b>Internal Assets</b>	<b>Commitment to Learning</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>21. Achievement Motivation</b>-Young person is motivated to do well in school.</li> <li><b>22. School Engagement</b>-Young person is actively engaged in learning.</li> <li><b>23. Homework</b>-Young person reports doing at least one hour of homework every school day.</li> <li><b>24. Bonding to School</b>-Young person cares about her or his school.</li> <li><b>25. Reading for Pleasure</b>-Young person reads for pleasure three or more hours per week.</li> </ol>	
				<b>Positive Values</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>26. Caring</b>-Young person places high value on helping other people.</li> <li><b>27. Equality and Social Justice</b>-Young person places high value on promoting equality and reducing hunger and poverty.</li> <li><b>28. Integrity</b>-Young person acts on convictions and stands up for her or his beliefs.</li> <li><b>29. Honesty</b>-Young person "tells the truth even when it is not easy."</li> <li><b>30. Responsibility</b>-Young person accepts and takes personal responsibility.</li> <li><b>31. Restraint</b>-Young person believes it is important not to be sexually active or to use alcohol or other drugs.</li> </ol>
					<b>Social Competencies</b>
		<b>Positive Identity</b>			

## Fact Sheet:

# The Impact of Restorative Justice

## “What We Are Learning from Research”

Restorative justice represents a promising new practice theory that is receiving an increasing amount of attention in North America, Europe, Australia and New Zealand. It provides an entirely new framework for understanding and responding to crime and victimization within American society. Restorative justice emphasizes the importance of elevating the role of crime victims and community members through more active involvement in the justice process, holding offenders directly accountable to the people and communities they have violated, restoring the emotional and material losses of victims, and providing a range of opportunities for dialogue, negotiation, and problem solving, whenever possible, which can lead to a greater sense of community safety, social harmony, and peace for all involved.

### What We Are Learning

1. Most restorative justice interventions, such as victim offender mediation and family group conferencing, operate in the juvenile justice system, even though such programs have also been found to be effective in the adult criminal justice system.
2. While there are a range of other interventions and policies (such as Reparative Probation Community Boards in Vermont or circle sentencing and talking circles in Native American and Canadian First Nation communities or victim offender dialogue groups in prisons) that are creatively broadening the application of restorative justice for both juveniles and adults, little empirical data is available. Focusing on the empirically grounded restorative justice impact of primarily victim offender mediation over many years, and the more recent experience of family group conferencing, is not meant to suggest that these are the only restorative justice interventions. They are simply the most developed and empirically documented expressions of the restorative justice movement at this point in time.
3. Restorative justice, as expressed through victim offender mediation and family group conferencing, offers a more demanding, active, and clear opportunity for offenders to be held directly accountable to the person(s) and communities they have harmed. Rather than being “soft on crime”, these interventions require far more responsible behavior through making amends to crime victims than most current correctional interventions. The direct human consequences of unlawful behavior are dealt with more directly through restorative justice. Offenders are far more likely to successfully complete their restitution obligation when participating in mediation.
4. Through a process of facilitated or mediated dialogue, these restorative interventions have been found to provide many benefits to those victims of primarily property crimes and minor assaults that choose to participate in them. Victims are able to receive information about the crime, express the impact of the offense to the person responsible for the crime, and gain a greater sense of closure, including some form of restitution in most cases. Crime victims are far more likely to have experienced the justice system as fair and helpful when they are able to participate in a restorative justice intervention such as victim offender mediation. Victim participation must, however, always be voluntary. These interventions are not meant for all crime victims and offenders, and highly victim sensitive procedures are required.
5. Preliminary data suggests that restorative justice holds a great deal of potential for diverting a large number of property offenses and minor assaults from the formal justice system, working effectively with offenders once they have entered the correctional system following conviction, reducing the frequency and severity of further criminal behavior (although this data is not yet conclusive), and ultimately redefining and restructuring our justice systems in order to more actively involve and serve crime victims, victimized communities and offenders.

### Public Support for Restorative Justice

There is a growing body of evidence to suggest that the general public is far less vindictive than often portrayed and far more supportive of the basic principles of restorative justice than many might think, particularly when applied to property offenders. Studies in Alabama, Delaware, Maryland, Michigan, Minnesota, North Carolina, Oregon and Vermont have consistently found a public deeply concerned with holding offenders accountable while being quite supportive of community-based sanctions which allow for more restorative outcomes.

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## **Victim Offender Mediation & Dialogue**

The largest multi-site study of victim offender mediation conducted (Umbreit, 1994), with juvenile offenders in programs in four cities (Albuquerque; Austin, TX; Oakland, CA; and Minneapolis) led to the following findings. These findings are consistent with 14 other studies of VOM in Canada, England, and the U.S. with both juveniles and adult offenders.

1. A total of 3,142 cases were referred to the four programs during a two year period with 95% of the mediation sessions resulting in a successfully negotiated restitution agreement to restore the victim's losses.
2. Victims of crime who met with their offender, in the presence of a trained mediator, to discuss the impact of the crime on their lives and to develop a plan for restoring their losses were far more likely to be satisfied (79%) with the justice system response to their case than similar victims who go through the normal court process (57%).
3. After meeting the offender, victims were significantly less fearful of being revictimized.
4. Offenders who met their victim were far more likely to successfully complete their restitution obligation to the victim (81%), than similar offenders who did not participate in a victim offender mediation session (58%).
5. Considerably fewer and less serious crimes were committed by offenders who participated in victim offender mediation (18%) when compared to similar offenders who did not meet with their victim (27%).

## **Family Group Conferencing**

Two studies have been conducted to assess the impact of family group conferencing with young offenders. The largest study was conducted by Maxwell and Morris (1993) to assess the impact of a new law in New Zealand that requires broad use of family group conferencing for young offenders. A second and very preliminary study was conducted by Wundersitz and Hetzel (1996). This study examined the initial impact of family group conferencing for young offenders in South Australia.

1. Far more frequent and active involvement of families in the justice process has occurred. Young offenders and victims, as well as their families and support people indicate that the conferencing process had been helpful.
2. As a result of the Children, Young Person and Their Families Act that was enacted in New Zealand in 1989 and which requires broad national use of family group conferencing, far fewer young offenders appeared in court and received convictions compared to before the Act was introduced. There were between 10,000 to 13,000 court cases each year compared to 2,587 in 1990. Commitments of young people to correctional institutions was cut by over 50% following the Act; in 1988, 262 young offenders were imprisoned compared to only 112 in 1990. This represents the largest systemic impact of a single restorative justice intervention anywhere in the world. While not leading yet to change in the entire criminal justice system, the broad use of family group conferencing in New Zealand bodes well for further system-wide restorative initiatives.
3. An 86% offender compliance rate with the decision of the family group conference was found in the Australian study (Wundersitz & Hetzel, 1996).
4. In the Australian study (Wundersitz & Hetzel, 1996), preliminary evidence indicates that 75-80% of those conferences in which a victim-based crime occurred had at least one victim present.

## **Circle Sentencing**

Research by Judge Barry Stuart (1996) in Canada has found an 80% reduction in further criminal behavior by those offenders who participated in the circle sentencing process. Offenders involved in circle sentencing had lengthy prior criminal records.

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**Center for Restorative Justice & Peacemaking**  
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## **St Croix Valley Restorative Justice Program, Inc.**

### **Mission**

The Mission Statement of the SCVRJP: *To Build and Sustain a Culture of Peace and Belonging through Restorative Justice Principles and Services in our Community.*

Restorative Justice emphasizes the fact that crime damages people, communities and relationships. Restorative Justice is about repairing the harm. Practices include offenders taking responsibility for their actions and to take action to repair the harm to the victim and the victimized community. Crime victims and the community assist in setting the terms of accountability and what is needed to make things right. Healing for all parties is at the heart of restorative justice. Values, truth and reintegration are all used in Restorative Justice Programs.

### **Programs**

#### **Victim Impact Panels**

Victim Impact Panels serving those convicted of driving intoxicated. Speakers share the experience of loss of life caused by intoxicated driving. Panels are held once a month with an average attendance of 50.

#### **Victim Offender Conferencing**

Victim Offender Conferences are meetings led by trained facilitators. Prior to a Conference the facilitators 'pre-conference' both parties involved, victim and offender. Support people for each party may also be present at the conference if pre-conferenced. A plan is developed by all parties to determine what needs to happen to 'make things right'.

#### **Victim Empathy Seminars**

Utilizing a combination of Victim Impact Panels and Circle process, parents, community members and offenders gather to listen to a victim share how crime impacted themselves and their family. Small groups form and offenders brainstorm the impact of their crime and what needs to happen to 'make things right'. Offenders then draft a letter of apology that is read back to the group. Parents and community members find this a meaningful process for everyone involved. Pre and post test show a shift in attitude regarding the impact of behavior on others.

#### **Underage Consumption Panels**

Targeted towards 17-20 year olds, these panels provide a brief alcohol assessment, education, awareness, consequences that result from Underage Consumption. Utilizing Restorative Justice Principle's stories will be shared and the impact on victim, offender and community will highlighted in the program.

#### **Girls Circle**

Girls Circle is open to teen girls, participants will engage in a process that encourages values, self-empowerment, improved decision making, awareness, relationships and positive life choices. Sister Circles are held at the Dakota County Juvenile Service Center.

### **Initiatives**

**Restorative Justice in Schools (providing facilitation and training)**

**Community Awareness (educating groups and organizations)**