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The International Journal of Restorative Justice 2019 Annual Lecture



On 12 December 2019, the **annual International Journal of Restorative Justice lecture** will be held during the 32nd Australian and New Zealand Society of Criminology Annual Conference (ANZSOC) conference in Perth, Australia. We cordially invite you to attend this year's IJRJ lecture:

The Indecent Demands of Accountability for Young People in Restorative Justice

by **Dr William R. Wood**

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The annual lecture will be introduced by **Ivo Aertsen** (editor-in-chief, University of Leuven, Belgium) and chaired by **Estelle Zinsstag** (managing editor, University of Leuven, Belgium).

- When: **12 December 2019, at 18:00**
- Venue: The 32nd Australian and New Zealand Society of Criminology Annual Conference (ANZSOC), at the **University of Western Australia, Perth, Australia** (room TBC)

Summary of the Annual Lecture

In this paper I critique the use of accountability in restorative justice conferences for young people. I argue accountability has perhaps become one of the 'plastic words' of modern policymaking and problem-solving, employed in myriad and even contradictory ways within restorative justice. I identify two problems in using the concept of offender accountability for young people. First, trauma-informed research suggests that appeals to normative frameworks of behaviour as used in concepts like accountability may be ineffective or even harmful for offenders with histories of trauma or significant adverse childhood experiences. Second, accountability can be irrelevant for building prosocial lives and interactions for those systemically excluded from capital in all its forms – what Zygmunt Bauman terms 'redundant populations' of modern economic progress. I examine how accountability reflects an emphasis on individual responsibility within expanding systems of structural irresponsibility for young people, characterized by growing acute mental health problems on the micro level, and equally acute social marginalization on the macro level. I conclude that accountability cannot have it both ways: as a mechanism of holding young people responsible for past, present, and future behaviours, while at the same time ignoring mental health problems and social marginalization of young people. Accountability should either be restricted to holding a young person to account for a particular wrong; or if it is expanded, it must be linked, programmatically and theoretically, to the acute needs of young people before, during, and after restorative conferencing.

The lecture will be published in issue (3)1, 2019 of the journal