



# EUROPEAN FORUM FOR RESTORATIVE JUSTICE

Connecting People to Restore Just Relations

## RESTORATIVE JUSTICE

---

Restorative justice offers a radically different way of understanding and responding to the problem of crime. The core of restorative justice is to rigorously address the harm caused by the criminal behaviour. It enables perpetrators to make themselves accountable to those whom they have harmed and in doing so understand their responsibility for the suffering of others and agree making reparation.

Restorative justice offers a practical alternative to the punitive impulse that results in high levels of imprisonment in many countries.

## THE EVIDENCE

---

There is considerable research evidence on the effectiveness of restorative justice. Victims and offenders report high levels of satisfaction with their participation in the restorative process.

Restorative justice generally results in positive outcomes for both victim and offender in relation to recovery from harm and desistance from offending.

## EFRJ

---

The European Forum for Restorative Justice with its more than 400 members is the largest European professional network on restorative justice. We offer support to implement and develop restorative justice through trainings, consultancy, research and events. We create the European Restorative Justice Policy Network to support the planning and implementation of restorative justice policy.

Find our publications and more information on [www.euforumrj.org](http://www.euforumrj.org)

## RESTORATIVE JUSTICE CAN REDUCE DETENTION

---

### *Diversion from crime*

Restorative processes such as family group conferences can reduce the risk of crime due to family problems. Restorative processes such as mediation and restorative circles can reduce the risk of crime caused by young people being excluded from or dropping out of school and teach students the values of responsibility and respect. Restorative circles and mediation can reduce the risk of crime in neighbourhoods caused by social exclusion, inter-group and inter-cultural conflict and gangs through the development of restorative cities or communities.

### *Diversion from prosecution*

The public can be sceptical about diversion from prosecution when they do not perceive any element of accountability for wrong doing and harm. Restorative processes such as mediation demonstrate real accountability and satisfaction from victims and consequently have been used to avoid prosecution. This approach can earn public credibility and support.

### *Diversion from custody*

Agreements with victims to repair harm and to avoid further offending made through restorative processes prior to sentencing can become court orders. This means that the agreements will be rigorously supervised and, if not complied with, the perpetrator will be returned to court. This has made restorative justice attractive to judges and can contribute to a reduction in the use of custody, especially when victims make it clear that they do not seek further punishment. There is a higher level of compliance to restorative agreements than to other community sanctions.

Restorative justice can also be used post-sentence as a means of enhancing a community sanction.

## RESTORATIVE JUSTICE CAN REDUCE CONFLICTS IN PRISONS

---

Restorative processes such as mediation and circles can have a significant impact on prison culture by reducing violent reactions to conflict. Restorative circles through which staff and inmates engage in dialogue on a range of issues and problems affecting life in prisons can improve respect, responsibility and relationships between prisoners and between staff and prisoners.

A proactive use of restorative practices can support the building of relationships within and outside prisons regarding staff, prisoners, their families and the wider community.

