

## **A Restorative-Based Framework**

**What is Restorative Justice?** Restorative justice is a methodology and a practice. It is used between individuals and within families and communities in order address behaviors and actions that have harmed and damaged relationships. It is used to open, re-open, and maintain lines of communication, and is where true healing, respect, and understanding begins. Although retribution and/or consequences can still be used for wrongdoings, the focus shifts from ‘what rules are broken and what punishment is deserved’ to ‘what harm was done and who/what needs to be done to repair that harm.’

Restorative practices are about the capacity of ordinary people to identify and solve their own problems. In short, restorative-based services have been found to be better and more successful for healing and redirection than their counterparts.

Restorative practices are a framework and an approach to wrongdoing or ‘harm.’ It is used to repair relationships and to begin dialogue between individuals, families, and communities in order to address behaviors and actions that have harmed, negatively impacted, and damaged relationships. It is used to open, re-open, and maintain lines of communication, and it is where true healing, respect, and understanding begins.

With so much present-day divisiveness, we can ask ourselves, how was caring unlearned? Peace isn’t simply the absence of hostilities; it’s about learning the art of getting along. True peace often requires a change of heart and attitude. A restorative framework asks of us to be open to understanding the life, context, experiences, and suffering of one another, and to demonstrate a willingness to see the humanity in others’ situations and experiences. Empathy and compassion are the natural states of humans. Compassion cannot exist without an empathetic orientation and lens.

### **Restorative-Based Dialogue:**

#### **The purpose of the restorative-based dialogue:**

- To talk about what needs to be talked about. No one in particular decides what needs to be talked about – everyone has a voice and equal power.
- To recognize that everyone has a ‘side’ to tell; all ‘sides’ get to be shared.
- To talk about how each person has been negatively impacted, to share honestly what each person’s intentions were, and to repair any harm/prepare for the future.
- The focus is to clear the path vs. solve the problem.

**You can tell communication is restorative if....:**

- Everyone is heard; everyone has a chance to tell his or her ‘side.’
- People speak ‘from the heart.’
- The communication is not shame or blame-based.
- People’s feelings aren’t dismissed.
- People are able to hear in what ways they have had a negative impact on others.
- Rules and punishment are not the dominant mindset.
- Respect - how you show it is not necessarily how the other person needs it. If others feel disrespected, it is your responsibility to adapt your style.
- Taking responsibility is valued over focusing on the mistake that was made/wrongdoing that was done.