

IMPACT JUSTICE

A national innovation and research center

RESTORATIVE DIVERSION

repairing harms and relationships through the power of community

Restorative Justice encourages constructive responses to wrongdoing. It brings together those who have harmed, their victims, and affected community members into processes that repair harms and rebuild relationships. At its best, restorative justice produces consensus-based plans through face-to-face dialogues that meet victim-identified needs while supporting the positive development of those who've harmed. This can take many forms, most notably community conferencing models and circle processes.

The Restorative Justice Project at Impact Justice.

sujatha baliga, director of the Restorative Justice Project, leads Impact Justice's efforts to institutionalize restorative justice alternatives to youth and adult incarceration and zero-tolerance school discipline policies across the United States. Ms. baliga successfully implemented a restorative youth diversion program in Alameda County, CA, that currently keeps approximately 100 youth out of the juvenile legal system each year.

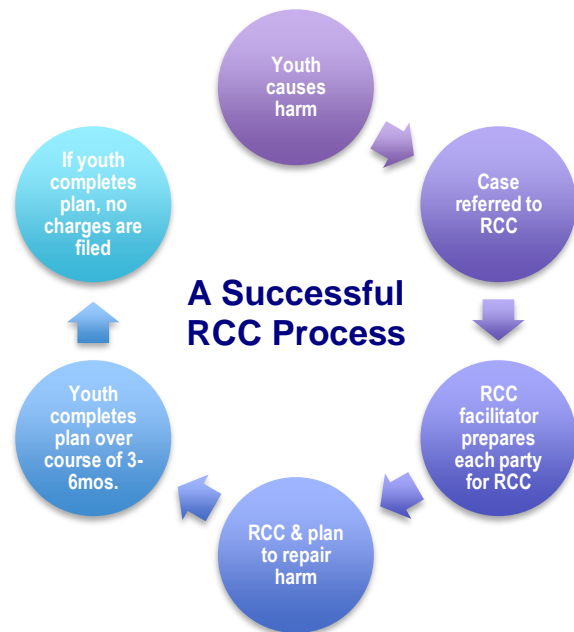
The Restorative Justice Project's approach is unique in its explicit goal of engaging communities to centralize victim-identified needs while reducing incarceration, recidivism, racial and ethnic disparities, and related social and fiscal costs. To that end, the Restorative Justice Project offers training and technical assistance in two primary restorative youth diversion models: Restorative Community Conferencing (RCC) and Circle Process. With generous support from The California Endowment, The Zellerbach Foundation, Google, and Open Philanthropy, the Restorative Justice Project is assisting communities throughout California and across the nation to implement pre-booking and pre-charge restorative diversion programs.

How Does Restorative Community Conferencing Work?

RCC offers a promising way of addressing youthful wrongdoing, with its ability to reduce recidivism, satisfy victims of crimes, and increase community involvement. After an incident has occurred that would normally result in criminal charges or a school disciplinary process, RCC offers a voluntary opportunity for dialogue. During the RCC, the young person, victim, family and community members discuss the crime, its causes and effects, and produce a consensus-based plan for the young person to make things right by their victim, family, community and self.

In each RCC there is self-reflection by all parties, and firm yet supportive accountability culminating in a commitment to help a young person overcome obstacles and do right by the victim, themselves, and their community. When the plan is completed within 3-6 months, the case is closed without charges being filed. RCCs are most effective with more serious crimes, which have an identifiable victim such as robbery, burglary, car theft, assault/battery, arson, teen dating violence, and sexual assault.

91%
of Alameda County
RCC victim
participants said they
would participate
in another RCC



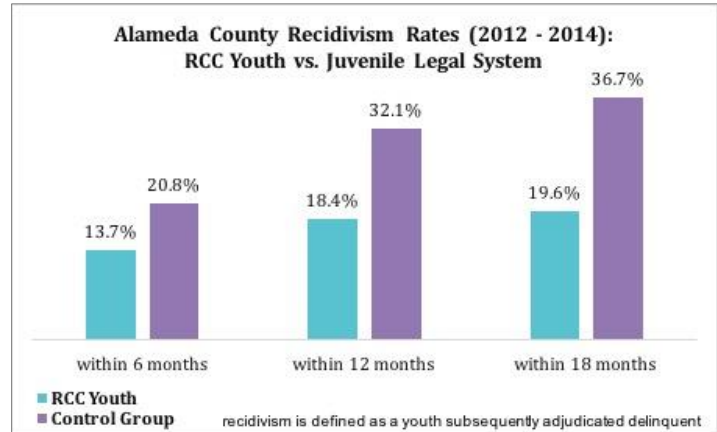
How Does Circle Process Work? Circle Process involves a facilitated dialogue using a talking piece and can be implemented in a broad range of contexts, from welcoming an individual back into the community after a period of incarceration to addressing conflict between community partners. Like RCC, Circle Process can be used to address youthful wrongdoing by asking the young person, the victim, and their supporters questions about the incident and their needs.

What Does The Restorative Justice Project at Impact Justice Do?

Impact Justice is committed to helping communities build programs across the nation that live up to the best restorative justice has to offer.

- **Technical Assistance:**

The Restorative Justice Project is collaborating with community based organizations and systems partners to introduce restorative youth diversion as an alternative to youth incarceration in 10 cities across the country. As part of this work, the Restorative Justice Project trains community based organizations in both Circle Process and Restorative Community Conferencing (RCC) as pre-charge and/or pre-booking diversion models for youth accused of crime.



- **Research:** In addition to assisting in the establishment of restorative youth diversion programs, the Restorative Justice Project collects and evaluates data on these models. By comparing outcomes for youth whose cases are addressed through restorative processes to outcomes for matched samples of young people whose cases are sent through the juvenile legal system, the Restorative Justice Project is developing reliable quantitative data on the effectiveness of restorative diversion programs.

- The US Department of Justice's Office for Victims of Crime (OVC) funded the Restorative Justice Project to develop a national survey and report on what it means for a restorative justice program to be both culturally responsive and victim-oriented.

- **Toolkit:** The California Endowment has funded the Restorative Justice Project to create a robust toolkit for jurisdictions looking to implement pre-charge restorative youth diversion programs. Through descriptions of past success stories and best practices, this toolkit will provide a step-by-step guide to building relationships with community and criminal legal system stakeholders and establishing a culturally responsive victim-oriented restorative youth diversion program. This toolkit will include sample documents such as a Memorandum of Understanding to ensure that communications within restorative processes cannot be used in a court of law.

- **Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence:** With the support of the Ms. Foundation for Women, The Just Beginnings Collaborative, and Blue Shield of California Foundation, the Restorative Justice Project is exploring restorative justice models geared towards addressing child sexual abuse, intimate partner violence, and sexual harm. The Restorative Justice Project's nuri nusrat has also received a Soros Justice Fellowship to create a restorative diversion model to address the particular needs caused by child-on-child sexual harm.

For more information, please visit www.ImpactJustice.org

Impact Justice is an innovation and research center, tapping into bold, original ideas to reduce incarceration and shining a spotlight on existing efforts that need to be embraced. Impact Justice is committed to fostering a more humane, responsive, and restorative system of justice in our nation. Our bedrock belief is that to build a better justice system, we must first imagine a better system.