



**RESTORATIVE
SOLUTIONS**

reducing harm, resolving conflict



Restorative Approaches & Violence Reduction

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Increases in the level of serious violence has reached epidemic proportions. The Government has responded by funding those areas who statistically based on NHS data have the greatest problem. This has led to the creation of Violence Reduction Units (VRUs) in 18 areas in England and Wales. Most VRUs are adopting a Public Health Approach which is described by Christmas & Srivastava Public Health Approaches in Policing 2019 as follows;

Population focus

Public health approaches start with the needs of the public or population groups rather than with individual people. This is different to healthcare where the focus is on the individual patient, or reactive policing where officers respond to calls about individual victims or perpetrators. Public health approaches involve interventions delivered at population level.

The causes of the causes

Taking public health approaches means looking behind an issue or problem or illness to understand what is driving it. Often called 'social determinants' or 'structural factors', these are the circumstances such as housing, education, indebtedness and income that underpin people's lives and make them more or less likely to:

- experience criminal victimisation
- have poor health outcomes, have less access to health services, and die prematurely
- have contact with the police and other services; and
- enter the criminal justice system.

Prevention

Public health approaches start from the principle that prevention is better than cure. A three-tier approach is often used, which recognises that there are opportunities to be preventative even after a problem has emerged:

- primary prevention is preventing the problem occurring in the first place;
- secondary prevention is intervening early when the problem starts to emerge to resolve it; and
- tertiary prevention is making sure an ongoing problem is well managed to avoid crises and reduce its harmful consequences.

This is a different way of thinking and operating; moving away from traditional enforcement which is endorsed by a number of policing practitioners who have publicly stated the Police cannot arrest their way out of this problem. The challenge to those involved in developing and delivering Violence Reduction including their local partners is how to innovate within this new and diverse context.



Restorative Justice

Restorative Justice (RJ) is here defined as a process which:

bring[s] those harmed by crime or conflict, and those responsible for the harm, into communication, enabling everyone affected by a particular incident to play a part in repairing the harm and finding a positive way forward.

(Restorative Justice Council 2014)

There is now a considerable evidence-base supporting the use of RJ in the criminal justice context. A summary of the evidence presented here examines four main areas of impact: effects on victims, effects on re-offending, financial implications, and getting cases brought to justice. A full reference list is attached at Appendix A.

Impact of Restorative Justice Conference on victims of crime

- 72% of RJ victims were either satisfied or very satisfied; much higher than conventional approaches
- There was an 85% satisfaction rate with face-to-face RJ conferencing
- 78% would recommend RJ conferencing to others
- RJ conferences led to 49% fewer cases of victims with clinical levels of post-traumatic stress symptoms
- There were 36% fewer symptoms of post-traumatic stress in general
- 62% of victims in the UK studies said that RJ had made them feel better
- A greater proportion of RJ victims said that they felt more secure after their case had been dealt with, compared to victims who experienced the court process only
- Only 5% of RJ victims believed that their offender would commit the same offence against them
- RJ provided 72% of victims with some degree of closure, thus enabling them to move on from the offence
- 'Face to face interaction and getting to know what the other party is like' has been shown to bring strong benefits to victims of crime where they are willing to engage in RJ

Effects on Reoffending

- 7% to 45% fewer repeat offences over the two years following RJ conference
- There are 22% fewer reconvictions following a RJ conference

Financial Implications

- RJ is estimated to have saved the criminal justice system nearly twice as much money as the scheme's cost.
- There is an £8 saving for the Criminal Justice Sector for every pound spent, and this excludes health savings.

Cases Brought to Justice

Offenders diverted to RJ were twice as likely to be brought to justice than those that were allocated for prosecution.

Body of Evidence

In summary, there is an extremely robust evidence base for the use of Restorative Justice Conferences in both a diversionary and supplementary capacity, with a number of offences, including violent and property crimes. This form of RJ has been demonstrated to increase victim confidence in the criminal justice system, whilst helping victims to move on following offences in ways that bring health benefits among other advantages.

Furthermore, RJs have been shown to reduce reoffending in trials conducted in several different continents. The resulting reduction in victimization leads to less emotional and psychological harm being caused by crime. It also brings financial benefits, both to potential victims and, where serious offending is curbed, to criminal justice institutions and the taxpayer.



Restorative Approaches & Violence Reduction

Restorative Solutions (RS) is a not for profit Community interest Company that prides itself on the influence it has had on the adoption of Restorative Justice in the Criminal Justice Sector (CJS), but the real jewel in the crown is the way it has innovated and pioneered the use of Restorative Approaches (RA) which takes all the principles and the methodology of RJ and applies it in a much wider sense than the justice sector.

Restorative Approaches could be described as an eclectic problem-solving tool whereby the practitioner and decision makers look at a problem restoratively. This means that the approach is not confined to justice issues, the approach addresses the cause of the conflict and harm and through a restorative process a resolution or solution is achieved, the approach is effective at the primary, secondary and tertiary stage of a problem.

The approach integrates well within a problem-solving model for example within a model using Scanning Analysis Response Assessment (SARA) a problem can be looked at Restoratively during

the analysis, in determining the response and in assessing if anything has changed or whether the intervention has worked or not. A Restorative Approach allows you to look at a problem differently. A Restorative Approach flourishes and takes on a life of its own in an empowered problem-solving environment practitioners and decision makers are allowed the freedom to innovate using the principles of a Restorative Approach.

Training of practitioners and decision makers is essential in adopting a Restorative Approach. This paper is not intended to replace a training module. The adoption of Restorative Approach as an eclectic problem solving model is most effective when it is part of a cultural or organisational change process or is embedded at the outset in a new start up.

Examples of Restorative Approaches

Restorative Solutions have been engaged for the last sixteen years developing new approaches with Restorative Approaches (RA). Some examples include a national programme introducing community problem solving panels using a RA. A number of secure establishments have adopted a RA in order to deal with harm and conflict within their institutions, RA has been integrated into the adjudication process reducing the need for extended sentences, and preventing escalation of violence within the establishment. RA in prisons has been used effectively to deal with conflict on the wings of prisons and also to resolve conflict between staff and inmates. RA in a secure establishment is most effective when a whole prison approach is taken with inmates being empowered to resolve conflict at its early stages.

RA has been used as a tool in homes with looked after children who persistently go missing. A RA significantly reduced the frequency of vulnerable young people going missing from home who after being through a RA recognised the harm they were causing to others and how vulnerable and at risk they were when missing. RA has been used to deal with domestic disputes between neighbours resolving long standing issues and preventing escalation and violence. RA is used in cases of hate crime where the perpetrator is confronted with the consequences of their action through a structured programme based on the principles of RA.

A RA model is used to address child to parent violence in the home, adopting a whole family approach and RA principles. Conflict and violence in the home is addressed, preventing the young person from going into custody or care and reducing the call upon public services.

RA in schools is a well-known concept, RS have been pioneering this approach since its inception. A whole school approach is recommended and RA can be used within many facets of the educational establishment to deal with conflict within or outside of the school. An empowered model with pupils trained, empowered and equipped to bring a restorative intervention about is a powerful model. More recently RS have been involved in a behavioural change programme in schools intended to reduce the number of exclusions and improve the safety and well-being of pupils and staff in the school. This change of behaviour leads to a reduction of violence in the community. By addressing behaviour which leads to exclusions restoratively the pupil remains in the school and is reintegrated back into the school's community. It is well known that exclusions lead to gang formations, violence and acquisitive crime committed by young people as a consequence of being excluded. RA has the potential to significantly impact on school exclusions and change behaviour.

Conclusion

A wealth of evidence exists showing that restorative principles can be effective within or out of the justice sector.

The pioneering and innovative approach by RS using a restorative approach as an eclectic problem solving tool brings great opportunities for VRUs at all of the three levels of prevention; primary, secondary and tertiary.

The limits of how practitioners and decision makers might innovate or apply RA in an empowered environment will only be limited by their imagination.

As Mark Twain stated "If your only tool is a hammer all you will ever see are nails."

Appendix A

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About Restorative Solutions

Our Mission

As a Community Interest Company (CIC) we are a not for profit organisation, committed to delivering innovative restorative solutions for the benefit of the community as a whole, by reducing harm and resolving conflict. RS CIC delivers hands on restorative justice services for Police and Crime Commissioners and other clients, training in all aspects of restorative approaches, consultancy and management at both strategic and operational levels.

We innovate in restorative approaches and we are developing pioneering programmes in the sectors of health, prisons, education and child to parent aggression. We continue to advise and influence senior decision makers in the government and we contribute to publications and conferences.



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